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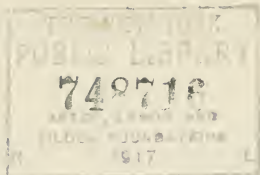
FORMING
A SUPPLEMENT
TO
"THE END OF CONTROVERSY, CONTROVERTED."

BY
JOHN J. WHITE.

PHILADELPHIA:
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INTRODUCTION.



THE salvation of the immortal soul is an object infinitely paramount to every other consideration. Whatever, therefore, professes to point out the means through which we may attain that great aim and end of our existence, must possess interest for all who are sufficiently awakened to the reality of this truth. I class myself in the number of honest inquirers Zion-ward; and cannot view with indifference either the theories or the efforts of my fellow-men, to mark out for me the narrow way to life everlasting. I am bound, at the peril of all I value, to judge the doctrine which calls me from the path of my earthly pilgrimage to another and divergent course. If that I tread be not demonstrably the

sure and the only road to peace—if I cannot, at least to my own conscience, give a satisfactory reason for the hope that is in me—if a doubt or a shadow lie upon my faith—it behooves me to try well its foundation, and rest not until I shall have reached the rock whereon my building may abide the storm and the flood. The issue, with me, is immeasurably beyond all that the natural understanding can conceive of life or death.

It is with feelings of this character that I have again read a work entitled “The End of Religious Controversy,” in order to examine another, recently issued to refute it, called “The End of Controversy Controverted.” The former was written in the early part of the present century, by John Milner, a Doctor of Divinity in the Roman Catholic Church, and purports to be a friendly correspondence with a Society, of a few individuals, to prove the exclusive claim of his co-religionists to be the church of Christ. The latter also takes an epistolary form, in a series of letters addressed to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, by John H. Hopkins,

Doctor of Divinity and Laws, and Bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Although professing to be a refutation of the former, it is so but to a limited extent. The claims of both rest upon the same basis of an outward hierarchy, ordained by, and descended, through certain outward forms and rules, from Jesus Christ. The dispute is in reality much more political than essential. Both the combatants are acrimonious and unsparing towards their rival communities, yet they mutually recognize the lineaments of a common parentage and close relationship.

While I accord my meed of praise for the more liberal and enlarged Christian charity of the latter champion, I cannot withhold, even from the fanatic intolerance of the former, the respect which is due to apparently legitimate deductions from conceded premises. I may freely confess that, great as is the ability and research displayed by the Protestant writer, and overwhelming the testimony he brings to prove the licentiousness and corruption of that institution, which, however adulterous, he yet concedes to be the spouse of Christ in common with

his own, I should hardly be won, were I a member, by his learning or his logic, to abandon it; for though the despotic and degraded, it is yet the elder claimant to the throne. These considerations, however, I leave to their respective followers and especial opponents, as little affecting the position I shall undertake to defend in the following pages. I must reject equally the claim of the Roman Catholic to bow me at his shrine, or destroy me by his anathema, and the more modest invitation of the Episcopal dignitary, to consider his organization the true church and Bride of Christ. The portraits they have drawn are sufficiently true and repulsive, to satisfy an impartial inquirer that great talents and learning have been enlisted on both sides, rather in the defence of error than the search after truth. Without, therefore, entering into an extensive examination of their systems of religion, I propose, in a plain and direct essay, to furnish my fellow-pilgrims with a better guide to attain that assurance which shall effectually end religious controversy.

I have called this a Supplement to the works

in question. It is intended to supply what is wanting in both, and what both profess to demonstrate; that “*secure, never-failing, and universal rule or method adapted to the abilities and circumstances of all, which our Divine Master, Christ, in establishing a religion here on earth, left, by which those persons who sincerely seek for it may certainly find it.*” In undertaking to show this rule, I give my full assent to the fundamental premises laid down in both. This will more fully appear in the progress of my exposition. All that is necessary now, is to determine and agree upon the common and accessible standard, to try what is disputed, and to prove what may be advanced. For this purpose they have used, and I shall use, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. By universal consent, these sacred records have been appealed to as the test of Christian doctrine; and, as common ground, however wrested and abused in their application, they must continue through Time the highest outward authority.

Both my predecessors have started with their assumed systems of what is called *Faith*, as con-

ceded or established. Neither of them seems to have looked beyond the narrow scope of a proselyting missionary for a particular sect of professors. They stand, alike, the harnessed and obedient servants of organized intellectual despotisms, which forbid all trains of thought other than in the prescribed channels of educational discipline; and, as a consequence, their contest is for little else than political supremacy, on the very contracted question of apostolic episcopal descent. I should but partially explain my views on the subjects treated by them, in directing inquiry merely to the opinions of men eminent for sanctity and learning. It is necessary, in order to elucidate the position and the meaning of those who stand as lights and authorities, to take a much more comprehensive survey than either the Roman Catholic or the Protestant Episcopal writer has attempted. My purpose is, therefore, to trace, in as condensed a manner as the importance of the subject will permit, the position in which I find myself as a descendant of my first progenitor, in order to give more clearly a reason of the hope that is in me of a

resurrection from the dead, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. I expect, in this way, to reach the issues involved, and furnish the honest inquirer with the means of solving that great problem or question presented, viz.: What is the certain and the only rule or method for the salvation of his never-dying soul?



AN EXPOSITION,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THEORY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

THE only authentic record of the creation of man, is contained in the inspired account of Moses. No other exists which deserves even to be ranked as a reasonable tradition or speculation. I shall confine my remarks, therefore, to the text as we receive it in the book of Genesis, and endeavor to elucidate that history by the lights and analogies at my disposal.

The science of Geology has successfully impugned the literal construction formerly placed on the statement therein made, that the earth was created in six days. Its incontestible proof that these days were epochs or stages, separated from each other by vast intervals, can only shake

the faith of the superficial reader. I shall not pause to consider in the outset, the highly figurative style of ancient Scripture history, nor dwell on the absolute necessity for large allowances on the misty ground between allegory and fact, in reading Genesis and Job. If the literalist, like his kindred who imposed the penance of falsehood on Galileo, will abide in the outer court of bigotry and prejudice, I fear we shall not travel far in a harmonious search after truth. It is the spirit—the true intent and meaning of the writer—which should be the goal; and surely, of all compositions, these most ancient chronicles require the largest latitude of interpretation.

In another department of science—that of Ethnology—a theory has latterly sprung up, which, if it shall ever become as firmly established, will constitute a far more formidable barrier in my path. I allude to the doctrine of a diverse origin for the various races of men. It is, nevertheless, as yet but a mere theory—plausible, it is true, but wholly unsusceptible of proof—and from its nature destined to remain

such, however it may enlist the learned in its support. But even here, the array of authority is, in my estimation, very much against it. I dismiss it, therefore, as presenting no obstacle to the reception of the Mosaic account of our parentage—an account which seems to me almost self-evident, as the irresistible corollary of an inquirer, with even no better light or guide than his unassisted reason.

According to this, God created a single pair of progenitors for the whole human race. In them He manifestly created their posterity; for by the act of creation, properly so called, and alone applicable to Him, all the future of the race must necessarily have been involved. There can be no past nor future, however contradictory such an assertion may sound, with Deity himself, which is substantially to say that He is unchangeable. Nothing imperfect or susceptible of improvement was ever formed by Him. Hence man, the crown of his works, made after his own image, came from the hand of his Maker, absolutely perfect in himself and all his posterity. In scientific language, we use the

term law to signify that uniform series of successive existences by which the condition of the first becomes impressed on all that follows. We say that such is the law of the species; as the animal was originally, so he is now, modified and changed only by the circumstances through which he has passed. The law that regulated the first link in his series of ancestors, is the same that governed his own birth, although the descendant at this day, may have become a very dissimilar being.

I therefore lay it down as an incontrovertible proposition, that in the beginning, all was formed perfect, fixed, and unchangeable forever. Though, as the upholder of the universe, not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, yet nothing ever has or ever will require modification or change as a consequence of God's creation.

In considering the state of Adam and Eve, we must then regard them as absolutely perfect. First, in the outward material body or habitation, of which the blood constitutes the life and sentinel — coursing through every part, nourishing

every fibre, removing every effete and excrescent particle, and renewing, in its appointed season, the fabric, as disease, injury, or decay may require, in part and in whole. Next, its immediate and mysterious inhabitant, that wonderful compound of perceptions and faculties called the mind or intellect—intangible to sense, yet even more demonstrable than the matter it inhabits and controls—of which reason is the life and regulator. Lastly, the still more inappreciable, though the true immortal man, known as the soul or spirit, and of which God himself was the life, light, and Lord Supreme.

The single peculiarity in the creation of the human race, was this—that God formed man “after his own image”—“in his own likeness;” that is to say, being thus, as a three-fold being, made perfect, and ordained to live forever, he was left free and unbiassed in his will. His Creator so framed and designed him, that the choice between good and evil was left entirely to himself. Nothing less than the freedom of will could have made him a probationer and a responsible being—liable, for its abuse, to con-

demnation; and capable of meriting, for its use, the reward of virtue.

It seems to me a self-evident proposition that, in this particular, the Most High relinquished his prerogative of foreknowledge. To suppose him the Creator, with perfect prescience of what followed in the history of his creature, is to make him the Author of all his woes—to believe him the very reverse of good. Nay, it uproots the foundation of moral accountability—of right and wrong—of equity and justice. I have no ground to stand on in my estimate of God and his attributes, if I do not believe myself perfectly free to will as I please. However sophistry may, in proving me the slave of circumstances, endeavor to demonstrate that I am but an automaton of fate, I feel conscious of a power that more than answers all which reason can suggest or receive. But I deny the doctrine as both irrational, and without foundation in the Scriptures of Truth—which, I trust, will be shown hereafter.

The narrative of the inspired writer states this substantially in the words, “The Lord God

formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* And again: "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."†

In the bold metaphors of oriental imagery, and the highly poetic character of the subject, the clime, and the genius of the author, spiritual conditions and facts are represented by, and blended with, outward realities. The garden of Paradise is highly typical of what, by a far bolder metaphor, we call the heart; the trees are still of the same compound—susceptible of a literal, though intended for a spiritual signification; but when we reach the fruit, it becomes impossible to doubt the import of the narration. The knowledge of good and evil never had any

* Gen. ii. 7.

† Gen. ii. 15 to 17.

connection with a tree, other than we find throughout the Holy Scriptures—in every part of which moral truths and spiritual conditions are represented by familiar outward objects.

I ask, then, what other conclusion can be drawn from the inspired history—from its commentators in every age—from the attributes of Deity—and from the knowledge we possess individually of ourselves and our ancestors, than that Adam, a single man, was created such as I have described, the one progenitor of the human race; that coeval with, and from him, as his complement, a single female, and in them all their posterity—stamped irrevocably in the same Divine image throughout all generations forever.

Let us contemplate the sphere, and the condition of such a being. The creation was absolutely perfect. Infinite Wisdom ordained and appointed the position and course of every individual in the series. The language to the prophet Jeremiah, when the word of the Lord came unto him, illustrates this: “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified

thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”* This ordination and appointment could be carried out only by the co-operation of the creature, thus free to choose the path of duty or rebellion. The prophet might have resisted, and so changed the ordination of the Most High. Adam did rebel, and overturned the whole plan marked out and prescribed for himself and his posterity.

In the position, however, wherein he was created, God would have been the Author of every act, the prompter of every movement. Liberty was given him to eat freely of every tree in the garden, except that of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent truly told Eve they should be as gods by rebellion, and the result abundantly proved its reality. While the will of the creature was always in subjection to the will of the Creator, one will, and that the will of Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and absolute Goodness, reigned supreme. When two wills were introduced by the transgression

* Jer. i. 5.

of that simple fundamental law of obedience, then man became a god to himself—first, the subtle casuist to bolster up and justify his crime; next, its terrible avenger in his own blood.

Does any one suppose it a fanciful theory, that Adam and all his descendants could easily have maintained the state of original peace and bliss? That under the Divine government, pain and sorrow would have been unknown, even in this confessedly probationary state? To me it appears the most astonishing event in real or fictitious chronicle, that he should have fallen from such a position. My reason is founded on the comparison between the path of a just man now, and then. In the present state of society, nearly all that influences us from without is for evil; then, all from without and from within was for good.

When we draw our conclusions from a contrast between man under different circumstances, and mark the enjoyment of communities eminent for virtue and religion—the miseries of states desolated by war, oppression, and crime—when we see how outward health, peace, and prospe-

urity, follow in the wake of humility and self-denial, even under the accumulated infirmities entailed on our physical, mental, and moral condition by untold centuries of ancestral folly and crime—can we doubt that, in his original purity and perfection, want, disease, and suffering would have been unknown? that the probationary period of sojourn here would have passed on to its close amid the highest enjoyments, because limited only by Infinite Wisdom to the domain of Virtue? Would not man have dropped this tenement of clay when that probation and its easy triumph were accomplished, without a sorrow or a pang? I consider such an inference the unavoidable result of even a comparison like that I have last instituted—how much more so, when the records of inspiration show him to be ever the object of an omnipotent Creator's unceasing care.

CHAPTER II.

OF MAN IN THE FALL.

IN the preceding chapter, I have endeavored to show the condition in which man was originally created. The theory appears to me not only scriptural, but the only possible hypothesis that can be framed, in accordance with what we know of his subsequent history and present state. On no other can the sacred narrative of events, most certainly the result of his lapse, and the means appointed for his redemption and final restoration, be satisfactorily explained. I have chosen to dwell but briefly on the subject, not that it is not of the greatest importance as the groundwork of all I have to advance, but because every stage of my subsequent inquiry will add evidence to strengthen and corroborate it.

The command to Adam was positive — “Of

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." In other words, death is the certain penalty of the exercise of thy will in opposition to mine. What death was this? Not the cessation of animal existence, for no such consequence followed. To suppose that obedience would have insured immortality to the flesh, is to involve our reason in a tissue of absurdities, too gross for even the credulity of a bigot or a fool. The body of Adam (and this includes the original pair, for "male and female created he them") was the same before and after his transgression, and, like that of his descendants, material; subject while living to physiological laws, and when dead to chemical change. It must have been, as our own, renewed continually by the assimilation of matter, and thus wholly transmuted through short and successive periods of his outward life. Experiments prove, beyond all doubt, that no atom of the frame I now possess, was mine a dozen years ago. Do I therefore question my identity, or that, if living a dozen years hence, my tabernacle of flesh will

be different from the one I now inhabit? The whole history of organized matter is that of an incessant and infinite variety of change. No property is so disputable as its ownership—no tenure so slight and so transient as its possession. He, therefore, who regards it, under any circumstances, or in any form, as worth anything more than the temporary use its Creator has assigned it, is a fit subject for the tyrannous yoke of superstition and spiritual bondage.

The death involved in this transgression was spiritual. The soul—the true, real, and immortal man—lost its life, the presence and immediate direction of God Almighty. The moment his free-will was exercised in opposition to the will of his Maker, that moment he renounced allegiance, and became a god to himself. The spirit, thus far, through Divine guidance, the supreme governor of his lower nature, was now subjected to that serpentine and seductive counsellor, the unassisted reason of man. The effulgence of light, which hitherto had revealed his path, became darkness; and henceforward he must grope in doubt and error, the prey of his

follies, delusions, and crimes. He descended to the level of the beasts that perish, but with this awful distinction—of an immortal nature fallen from its high estate, and armed with infinitely superior powers, perverted now to evil and his own everlasting torment.

Adam (including, as I have said, the first pair), by his rebellion, was undoubtedly a sinner in the true sense of the term. There is no other instance in which we dare apply the epithet in its strongest signification, because we cannot know the actual relationship between the individual and his Redeemer. The apostle Paul called himself the chief of sinners, for he felt the depth of his wretchedness in that body of death, when contrasted with the abundant grace he had received. But neither he nor any other man ever knew the measure of God's spirit which is meted to a brother in bondage. Without that knowledge, he who pronounces his fellow a sinner assumes the prerogative of God. We know, however, that Adam had, before his transgression, the spirit of God in the fullness, and without measure; and, therefore, that he committed the sin which

never was, and never can be forgiven. The penalty is now, as it was then, inevitable death. The whole tenor of the Sacred Writings proves this position. Yet, notwithstanding, in the infinite goodness of his Creator, the means of redemption and restoration were as freely offered to him as to any of his posterity.

The word sin is used in two widely different senses throughout the Scriptures. In the one it means, as above, the guilt of transgression incurred by the wilful offender. In the other, the consequences of the offence upon unoffending parties. It is in the latter sense that all his posterity sinned in Adam. All are born into the world innocent, it is true, of actual guilt; but affected by the fall of our first parents in this, that the natural, or merely animal part, has dominion over us. That divine life breathed by the Creator into his nostrils, whereby he became a living soul, is now lost; and man is wholly unfitted for the path of righteousness and self-denial. His tendencies are evil; and, to know everlasting rest and peace, he must be saved or

redeemed from the state in which he enters existence.

This second sense of the term sin is implied, throughout the Scriptures, where physical or moral deformity or disease is represented as entailed on one innocent of the original offence. The Jews were accustomed to regard it as an equivalent to this state of body and mind. Hence they inquired, in the case of the man blind from his birth—"Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"* And that Jesus attached to it the same meaning, is shown when, forgiving the sins of the man sick of the palsy, the scribes charged him with blasphemy. "For," said he, "whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go into thine house."† Here, as in every other instance on record, the sins forgiven by outward means, were diseases

* John ix. 2.

† Matt. ix. 5, 6.

or infirmities cured.* They were lively types of that forgiveness of sin effected by His spiritual appearance, through regeneration, in perfect accordance with his doctrine — “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”† But of this, more in its proper place.

That the unchangeable and just God should visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, as is declared in Exodus xx. 5, may seem repugnant to our ideas of equity and justice. Nothing, however, is more certain, in the daily experience of our lives. There is no human being on the face of the earth who has not received more or less of this inheritance from his forefathers. We recognise the fact continually, in justly ascribing to this or to that

* The account in Luke vii. 48, does not conflict with this, although no outward diseases are specifically mentioned. The plain import of the term sins, under the Jewish Law, is so clearly given by our Saviour in rebutting the charge of the Pharisees, that no language could have been used more to the point, “Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?”

† John iii. 3.

stock or family, hereditary virtues or vices, moral, mental, or physical. But where lies the responsibility? Not with the beneficent Creator, who gave, with free agency, his whole power and wisdom to equip his creature for life's journey through temptation. Rejected as he has been from the temple he formed for himself, he still is knocking for admission, and moulding the stubborn nature that refuses him an entrance. It is the very madness of folly to charge him with the result of rebellion against his authority. Were it possible for man to be restored to that state of perfection wherein he was created, without the dispensations to which he is subjected, the goodness of God would undoubtedly accomplish that end. But who dare choose—and the question is directly to the point—among all the communities of men, a circle of associates to be banded with throughout Eternity? We hope for better companions than we find here—and too well we know that our best assurance against the oppression of our fellows is in the multiplied afflictions of life, and the certainty of its speedy termination.

One of the first consequences of the fall, therefore, as appears from the Sacred History, was fratricide — and that, too, under the most aggravated circumstances of guilt. The diabolical act of Cain, the first-born in sin, has had no parallel in atrocity since it occurred. We must reasonably suppose that his education could scarcely have been of a character to prompt such a crime. For his parents, though doomed to suffering and remorse, had known the joys of Paradise, and experienced sufficiently the results of transgression, to avoid that most unnatural part which such a course of training would imply.

As we descend in the roll of the generations of men, amid a few redeeming characters recorded, the universal degeneracy becomes so absolute, that we are told, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”*

* Gen. vi. 5, 6.

We cannot believe that the unchangeable Deity would thus repent, and, in consequence, resolve to destroy man, whom he had created, from the face of the earth, if he had foreknown this result. Had he retained his prescience, as I have before shown, man could not have been a free agent. That he relinquished this prerogative, is substantially asserted in the above quotation, where he is said to have repented the experiment—for experiment it was—and, through man's exercise of the free-will given him, in rebellion to that of his Maker, it failed.

Let no one suppose that he magnifies either the character or the attributes of God, by an ascription of evidently impossible qualities, in violation of the plain meaning of the Scripture account. That it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, is positively asserted here. The same word, in the same unequivocal sense, is, throughout the Mosaic history, frequently employed to represent his change of purpose. Does this imply mutation in the counsels of the Most High? Certainly not. His purposes, in all his dispensations and dealings

with his rebellious, deceitful, and ever-changing creature, are steadfast and immovable. As well may we predicate mutation of the sun, whose rays are quivering in every form through the foliage, the clouds, and the streams. On a true mirror, the orb is reflected in perfect symmetry and never-varying lustre—so, from the creature he formed, would God's attributes and glory have shone forth forever without variableness or diminution. But it *seems* otherwise in the multifiform phases necessary to reach the endless subtleties and transformations of sin. Thus, he is said to be angry, to be jealous, to hate, to avenge, &c. Yet all is in perfect harmony with his attribute of Love. When we remember that his spirit strives with man for redemption from sin, as the fondest parent follows an erring child throughout his career of folly, with every possible device, that may terrify, or lure, or reason him back to virtue, we have a never-failing key to the sacred narrative.

The destruction of all that generation, excepting only eight, by a God of infinite mercy and love, proves how hopelessly low the race had

sunk in degradation. I hold it as an axiom that every individual who ever trod the face of the earth, and that every one who may touch its surface hereafter, has had and will have, all the means specifically necessary to the salvation of his and her soul, that God, in infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, with perfect knowledge of each one's separate wants, can furnish. With what feelings, then, must I look upon that condition of Adam's posterity, which made it necessary, in order to preserve the last flickering spark of life, to strike from around all else of animated nature! All but these eight were cut off for their wickedness. Their day of visitation must, therefore, have passed by, and spiritual life could not be imparted. Their own position was hopeless before; and their simultaneous removal was required for the preservation of the few who yet remained accessible to the influence of the grace given for salvation.

After this memorable epoch in our history, the interregnum was but short in the reign of evil. Again the same tendencies produced in the earth a similar result. It would appear,

however, that the 'desperate condition of the antediluvian race has never since been realized; and, according to the promise then given, no similar catastrophe will again occur.

I may here observe that, in regard to the chronology furnished in the account, and from which the date of man's creation has been calculated, I am free to confess my indifference. Even the increased time afforded by the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, has been proved far too short for the recorded reigns engraven upon the antiquities of Egypt. To me, it matters little whether or not science shall lengthen out the period of antiquity with added thousands upon thousands of years. The account of a vast interval in time, and a mighty extension in population, is too scanty and vague for criticism. A few important facts are given, so mingled in the obscurity of metaphor, that we must of necessity make allowance, in order to reconcile it with known natural laws. But the truth of the narrative is not affected by discrepancies in the text. I receive it as worthy of all credence, and am persuaded that in all parts,

when understood as intended, the Holy Scriptures will carry the internal evidence of their verity to every mind sufficiently experienced in spiritual things to comprehend the meaning of their writers.

With these remarks, I shall dismiss the consideration of the state to which man fell by the transgression of the first pair. The remaining history in Genesis, after the account of that impious attempt, in the same worldly-wise spirit, to circumvent Omnipotence by building a tower whose top should reach to heaven, is devoted to the single family from whom sprang an especially chosen people. This instructive and affecting narrative, together with that in the wonderful book of Job, affords an almost inexhaustible storehouse for illustration to the Christian traveller. But they are ancillary only to the purpose of this work, which is to show the design and scope of the dispensations God has furnished for the redemption of his fallen creature.

CHAPTER III.

INSTITUTION OF THE LAW.

To prove the tendency of the human mind towards idolatry and superstition, almost every page of its history may be cited with success. The loss of that revealing Light, by which only God can be known, left Reason to grope her way amid the inventions and contrivances that cupidity and ambition have ever been active in framing, to ensnare and subjugate man's affections and fears. Hence we behold him, in every age of the world, a prey to the most degrading systems and rites of religion. Nor is it the prerogative of lofty intellect to have been an exception to the rule. Knaves, it is true, have plotted and schemed successfully for empire over fools; yet, though the masters of their jugglery, they have never escaped the servitude of a more rigorous tyrant than themselves. They have

bound heavy burthens, grievous to be borne, upon the shoulders of their victims; but even when, in despotic authority, they have lorded it supreme, their own condition has ever been, if self-deceived, more abject than their dupes, and if not, infinitely more miserable under the double yoke of ambition and remorse.

At the period when the descendants of Jacob were groaning under the taskmasters of Egypt, we have every reason to believe that the world had almost universally lapsed into idolatry. The most forcible illustration may be drawn from the highly intellectual nation which oppressed them. For of all spiritual darkness, can we, from the testimony on record, discover any state more gross than that of a people whose sacred birds, beasts, and reptiles are still embalmed by millions, and whose monuments, the greatest wonders of the world, were raised to eternize their own corruptible bodies. Yet, at that time, the Egyptians were the most renowned and civilized of nations. From the valley of the Nile, science and learning poured forth their streams upon universal barbarism. They looked down, and

justly so, upon the far inferior condition of a world around, of which they were the lights and the exemplars.

It seems to me clear that, in the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, a two-fold design was to be accomplished by the call of the children of Israel from Egypt, and their journeys to the land of Canaan. By the institution of a Theocracy—an outward, direct, and visible government of a nation by Jehovah—it was intended to rescue the world from that gross idolatry into which it had fallen. By the dispensation of the Law, a more general and lasting benefit was to be conferred on man—a most lively representation, through a series of types in the outward history, of that spiritual journey which the soul must take, from its first state of Egyptian darkness, to the promised rest of peace and bliss.

The government of a nation by God himself, through mediums which men were accustomed to, and understood, is a spectacle unique in the history of the world. I may be told by the sceptic, that this isolated case is no exception to the long train of impostures in its imitation,

which history records. He may reject the miracles set forth in the account, as unworthy the credence of a philosophic mind — may refer to natural causes the successful passage of the Red Sea, and the marvellous supplies of water and sustenance to the hosts of Israel in the wilderness; he may ascribe the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, to the oriental custom of leading armies with a blazing beacon in their van; he may class the Urim and the Thummim, the tabernacle and the tables of stone, with the heathen oracles, the auguries, and the sybilline leaves of antiquity; he may show, throughout, a close parallel between the sacred and profane historian, and exhibit the former as but a servile imitator of the latter in his chronicles; yet, for all this, he cannot overthrow one jot or tittle of my faith in the verity of the sacred records. Nor is this state the result of a blind and bigoted credulity, that will not listen to, and weigh the evidence with impartiality and candor. Still less do I repose upon the labors of biblical antiquaries, and rest satisfied with the basis of learning and logical proof upon which they have

established the authenticity of the Scriptures. To a far higher source I look with confidence for their confirmation as a true narrative of events which most surely happened, in ages too remote for much assistance from the glimmering lights and analogies of cotemporaneous history. Without undervaluing, then, the argument drawn in their favor from the present and past condition of that wonderful people through whom they are derived, I receive them implicitly, because of the parallel they furnish me with what I have myself known. It is in my own spiritual experience that I have found the strongest testimony to their truth. And albeit, in dealing with their professed believers — especially those who call them the word of God, his exclusive revelation, and the highest rule of faith and practice — I have no need to speak in their defence, yet even these I shall hope to furnish with a better ground for their belief. If what I have laid down, and what I shall hereinafter advance as predicable of the human race, be not consistent parts of a perfect whole, in which every link is necessary to the series, and

upon which God's plan for man's salvation alone rests, then will this strongest argument for the divinely-inspired character of the Holy Scriptures be made, as superficial religionists would consider it, the weakest.

The immediate object of the Most High in establishing a Theocracy such as is set forth in the Mosaic account, must have been to lead the nations of the earth to a recognition of the one true and living God. By their descent and education, the Israelites were gradually fitted for the purpose. They were sprung from one whose title, "the father of the faithful," was merited by his ready obedience to a command which, of all others, best illustrates what is always required — the sacrifice of the heart's idol. Through their exalted ideas of this ancestry, and consequent exclusiveness, they were measurably kept intact, and their principles preserved, amid the general superstition of the age. With these feelings, they descended to the lowest depths of bondage. They became abject slaves, and were used to rear the detested monuments of pagan worship to the meanest of the creatures that

crawl upon the earth. It was in this very lowest estate that the Almighty condescended to visit them as a nation—gave them an outward leader—delivered them from their oppressors by that open and wonderful display of miracles—and directed their steps to a land flowing with milk and honey—a land of rest—of which these products, as requiring no labor, were the appropriate emblems.

The inhabitants of this land were idolaters, and, like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, doomed to extinction from their own vices, if not sooner destroyed. Instead, however, of fire and brimstone from heaven, the Lord overthrew them by the appointed hands of his chosen people. Of some, total extermination was required. Others were spared, but only as hewers of wood and drawers of water. But throughout the history, their wars and their oppression, their barbarous practices and their relentless exterminations, are directly referred to the command of God. No stronger instance occurs than the conduct of Samuel towards Agag, a helpless

prisoner, whom the prophet hewed in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.*

I have endeavored to show the position in which fallen man stands to his Maker, and the absolute necessity, in order to follow him in the devious courses he has chosen, that means should be specially adapted to the ends in view. Nor can I doubt for a moment that in all these cases, where the attributes of Deity seem to conflict, that the very best result for each individual was exactly that so decreed in the counsels of Omniscient Wisdom.

As above surmised, the first design in thus instituting a Theocracy, was to exhibit to a world of idolaters the fact of a nation under the direct and visible guidance of Jehovah. It is true, most certainly true, that God was worshipped in spirit by many others, who bowed down to wood and stone, and material objects, that world over. In their ignorance, their honesty gave them acceptance in his sight. But the tendency of false theories is ever to blind and bewilder, to

* 1 Sam. xv. 33.

ensnare and enslave. Although at that period, and at every period before and since, each man, woman, and child, has had the never-ceasing care and counsel of Israel's unslumbering shepherd—although salvation is an individual work, in which none can intermeddle between man and his Redeemer—yet the condition of the world required that public outward testimony to the existence and exclusive majesty of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hence, in every stage of its progress, this public testimony was rigidly required of the Theocratic commonwealth. The spoils, the symbols, and the practices of the heathen were forbidden, under the severest penalties; and all intermixture that might weaken its strength in maintaining it, became an offence of the greatest magnitude.

Notwithstanding this immediate direction of the Most High through its leaders, manifested by a constant display of signs and wonders, the children of Israel were a stiff-necked and rebellious people. During their wanderings, the outward tabernacle of God, with its visible shekinah, and at subsequent periods, the gorgeous

temple containing the memorials of their deliverance, proved insufficient to fix on them the importance of this high and solemn trust. It was because of the hardness of their hearts, that the scale of morality inculcated in their law was necessarily low — that their religious rites were adapted from the prevailing customs of heathenism — and that a continual outward display of God's power, presented irresistibly to their senses, was required.

The second, and as I conceive by far the most lasting benefit to the world designed by the institution of this Theocracy, was a series of outward types. In these, through a language intelligible to the minds of all, the progress of our spiritual pilgrimage from the bondage of sin to the perfection of that state whence we are fallen, was admirably illustrated. No man acquainted with the history, and having made advances in the way to Zion, can fail to recognize a close resemblance between these types without, and the spiritual anti-types within. The sacred narrative has accordingly furnished an inexhaustible storehouse to every subsequent age,

and received a confirmation from the righteous in every generation.

I have attempted to show the position occupied by man in relation to his Creator, both before and after his transgression. The consequences of that sin have been exhibited in his loss of the divine life, and constant tendencies to evil. The means of his redemption and restoration are, I conceive, set forth, both from the testimony of Scripture writers, and its obvious parallel to our spiritual experience in that dispensation of the Law. I shall therefore proceed to develop its conclusion, and the benefits it has conferred.

CHAPTER IV.

THE END OF THE LAW.

THAT outward Theocracy, the history and the scope of which constitutes the principal theme of the Holy Scriptures, was, from its origin, destined to pass away. As its termination approached, indications were presented, by prophetic teaching, of a higher and more glorious dispensation. I shall not follow, through the inspired writers, that continuous chain of prophecy foreshadowing its culmination and close. Nor do I esteem it of any consequence to advert to the separation of the children of Israel, and the eventual narrowing down of what formed originally the promised seed of the patriarchs, to a comparatively small remnant of the stock. The bulk of that race became idolaters, and the public testimony to the existence of the one true God fell, in later times, to the especial care of

the Jews. In them the prophecies were to be fulfilled, and the Law, as a Divine ordinance, ended.

I proceed, therefore, from the Old to the New Testament, in order to illustrate as well what I have deduced from the former, as to exhibit the plan of redemption, there partly evolved, but explained and enforced in the latter. These two great sections of the Bible are complements of each other, as necessary for mutual support as the dispensations of which they treat. In speaking thus of its parts, I must repudiate the idea that I attach importance to what is called the sacred canon of the Scriptures. On this point, the disputants first mentioned are not themselves agreed; nor is it to me of consequence what books are admitted or rejected by ecclesiastical councils or biblical critics. I can accord the text no higher authority than its own evidence furnishes, and its writers claim for it. The excellence of the Sacred Scriptures is derivative, and by no means equal. Yet I persuade myself that the commentaries offered in their use will prove me second to none in the high

estimate I place on them as a whole. Were I, however, called to discriminate by being compelled to choose one single book from the collection, as pre-eminent for the matter, the style, and the importance of its subject, that book would be the gospel of John.

This beloved disciple, and companion of our Lord Jesus Christ, commences his account, like Moses, with the Creation. "In the beginning" is the starting point with both—the one to depict the outward, the other the spiritual creation. In what beginning? We cannot apply the idea to God, who was ever the same as he is. It is therefore the beginning, in the account of the evangelist, of the spiritual creation of man. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."* Is not this in full accordance with the statement of Moses, that God breathed into man—the true, immortal man—the breath of life, and man became a living soul? As I have before shown, that

* John i. 4.

life of God was the light of man, until, by rebellion, he lost it; and, in consequence, his light became darkness. In the next verse, the evangelist tells us "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." He then introduces John the Baptist, the forerunner of that Light under the Law, and proceeds to state that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, as the starting point of his narrative.

This account is thus explanatory of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, from which we learn that Jesus Christ, of the lineage of David and Abraham through his reputed father, was conceived of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Highest, and born into the world in a manner unlike the genesis of every other child of the human family. It therefore necessarily follows, from the premises I have laid down as drawn from the Mosaic account of man's creation and fall, that the being thus introduced must have differed from all the posterity of Adam. He had, in common, a maternal ancestry up to the same source, but no like father. He was not, in consequence, affected with all else, by the origi-

nal loss of the Divine nature, farther than in the body and the mind, which, to a limited extent, may have been derived from his mother — how far, it would be presumption even to conjecture. The body, that is, the man seen of the Jews, as we outwardly see each other, was prepared of the mother; but the immortal, spiritual man, was directly of the Highest. Hence he was properly and truly called the Son of God—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

The whole historical account shows that he “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”† That, though he never disobeyed, “yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”‡ We must therefore infer that he could have disobeyed and fallen, as Adam and Eve did. I do not care to speculate on the consequences which might have followed,

* John. iii. 16. † Heb. iv. 15. ‡ Ibid, v. 8, 9.

but it seems sufficiently clear to my mind, that the terrible results of the first fall would have been equalled, if not exceeded. I speak thus in view of the little that has been accomplished in the work of regeneration, after that only perfect outward display of the attributes of God has been exhibited to man.

The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, has in a few words set forth the whole object of the legal dispensation. Chap. iv.—“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all:

“2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

“3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

“4. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

“5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

“6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent

forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.”

I have stated before, in substance, that the object, in the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, of that Theocratic institution, was evidently twofold: the first, that it should serve as a powerful testimony to the existence of the one true and living God; the second, that thereby a representation might be furnished in a series of outward events, of what every soul must, to a greater or less extent, experience in its wanderings from its first heritage of bondage and sin to that state of rest, in which, becoming the son of God by adoption, it can truly cry “Abba, Father.”

The Law given through Moses, was binding on none but the nation for whom it was instituted. With some of the fundamental commandments of morality and religion, it contained much that was adapted only to a state of great spiritual blindness and hardness of heart. Hence it was outward in all its parts—in its prescriptions, its penalties, its institutions, and its ceremonies. In its public rites, it was mo-

delled on the customs and habits of the age. Its sacrifices, its priests, its forms, its rituals, were adapted to the modes of thought then universal. Yet, though outward and temporary, it bears upon it the eternal stamp of Divinity in this—that while answering its immediate requirement as a code of legislation for a peculiar people in an age of national idolatry, it speaks, in its series of types, throughout all time to the church militant on earth, a language known and recognized.

The last of this series was the man so long foreshadowed, and thus miraculously introduced. He fulfilled and ended the Law as a divinely authorized outward institution. In him was perfected the whole design, and displayed the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

I say this, not because it is substantially so written by the Apostle, but of the absolute necessity of its admission by every soul that has travelled through the Law into the Gospel dispensation. The Jews looked for him, but rejected him—for the very plain reason that their eyes were blinded, their hearts hardened, and their hopes placed upon outward demonstra-

tions. In the state of a Roman conqueror, he would doubtless have been received as their Messiah. As an obscure carpenter, although showing his claim by the strongest outward testimony, the miracles which carried proof to their senses, he was despised and put to death by his own nation.

With what I have above advanced, my inductions from the scripture history of the original and subsequent state of man, with the means of his restoration, may be brought to a close with an exposition of the character of Jesus Christ as it is represented by himself. In answering his disciples, who requested him to eat, he said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of"—"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."* And in reply to Philip's request to show them the Father: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."†

* John iv. 32, 34.

† John xiv. 10.

The whole tenor of his sayings and doings is but a continuous corroboration of the fact, that in all things he did the will of the Father—that he never exercised his own, and presumed to know good and evil for himself—that he could of his own self do nothing.*

In the gospel of John, his beloved, and we have every reason to believe, most consistent disciple, the first doctrine preached by him is that of regeneration: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”† Yet although he said, “Ye which have *followed* me in the regeneration,” he never required nor experienced it himself. He was the Son of God from the beginning—the true heir—the pure, perfect and undefiled temple of the Highest—a man made under the Law, the crown and close of all its types—the incarnation—the only outward manifestation of Deity in the fullness.

“He that hath seen me,” said he, “hath seen the Father;”‡ yet he told the Jews, “Ye neither know me, nor my Father;”§ and subse-

* John v. 30.

† Ibid, iii. 3.

‡ Ibid, xiv. 9.

§ Ibid, viii. 19.

quently gave the reason in his query and answer — “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.”*

To those who can now hear his word spiritually, or in other phrase, “the hope of the Gospel which was,” and is “preached to every creature which is under heaven,” † there need be no further illustration of that great typical manifestation through whom life and immortality were brought to light, and salvation purchased for a fallen race. To those who cannot, I must commend the subject as one worthy of all their patient inquiry and prayerful consideration, and as of the highest importance to their everlasting welfare. False theories in religion are pernicious in the extreme. Although it is true that God accepts a man for that which he hath, and not that which he hath not, yet we are all more or less accountable for the opportunities presented, and their right use. The day of the Lord’s visitation comes equally, though diversely, to every man; and blessed is he whom nei-

* John viii. 43.

† Col. i. 23.

ther wilful ignorance, nor weakness, nor superstitious fears, shall divert into the by-lanes and crooked paths of outward formality, and criminal ease; who shall not surrender his judgment to his fellow-worm, and travel a road which must lead to destruction or to peace, with less interest and discrimination than common prudence would furnish in any decision on worldly matters. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* The Jews knew neither, because of their wilful blindness and hardness of heart; they crucified the Son, although, as he declared, they knew not what they did, and thereby brought down the just judgments of Heaven, in their destruction as a nation. He who will not open the heart to receive him in the way of his coming, may find, too late, that he too has crucified the very Son of God.

* John. xvii. 3.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.

THE great benefit we derive from the history of that chosen people, to whom the Almighty gave, through his appointed instruments, outward laws and ceremonies, is, as above stated, in the spiritual application of the instructive types therein furnished the traveller Zionward. No other nation but that had a government, both political and moral, emanating directly from the Most High. It did not, therefore, bind the Gentiles, though it affected, more or less, their principles and practices, as holding up to view, amid their multiform idolatry, the ceremonial worship of a people to the one true and living God. By the advent of the Messiah, in whom the whole was to be fulfilled and ended, the Law, as a Divine institution, was merged, and thereafter "a better covenant esta-

blished upon better promises." Not that the covenants or the dispensations of God are twain or changeable; he is ever the same in his design, but condescends to meet the low estate of his creature, and to veil his effulgence from the spiritual vision not yet fitted to receive it. The Law was therefore the precursor of the Gospel—the schoolmaster to lead to Christ—in its spiritual application. Its outward rites and ceremonies were typical of great and essential truths. It "made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."*

I have endeavored to show that the Law of Moses was, to us who are not bound by it, typical and figurative. It was given because of the hardness of heart which could receive nothing better. It was prescribed for a chosen nation in an age of general and most debasing idolatry. It conformed to the commonly received notions that superior beings, like fallible men, were to be propitiated and rendered favourable by offer-

* Heb. vii. 19.

ings. But offerings to the deities of the invisible world have ever been, from that of Abel down to the holocausts of Polynesia, of victims, inferior or human. In view of the low condition in which man enters the world, a being of mere animal instincts and desires, it is not surprising that he should estimate his idols by his own standard. And hence it is that gifts and incense, springing from that in him which would bribe and flatter, have been his spontaneous votive dedications. In the dispensation to the children of Israel, this universal practice was sanctioned, but made subservient to the great object, as typifying that perfect sacrifice of a pure heart, which is indispensable to the follower of Christ.

I need not use an argument, nor make a quotation, to prove that the Law, as a public divine institution, ended by the one great sacrifice on Calvary, when the veil of the outward temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. All professing Christians assent to this fact. But I shall not, I fear, find the same acquiescence in the assertion that but few, very few compara-

tively, have ever reached the Gospel dispensation, even in public profession. The same tendency to substitute anything as an offering to the Creator, which will save alive the strong will of the creature, has caused him to borrow heathen and Jewish rites to inaugurate, as the substance of religion, under the sanction of what he calls Christianity.

The Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."* The Apostle who thus defines, declares that it, *i. e.* the "hope of the gospel," "was preached to every creature which is under heaven."† This is substantially the same with John, who saw "an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."‡

* Rom. i. 16.

† Col. i. 23.

‡ Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

The Gospel thus preached to every creature, being the power of God unto salvation, was not of man, nor by man. It is the same life which was "the light of men, and which shineth in darkness: and the darkness comprehended it not."* This same power of God is the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth which Jesus promised his disciples; "whom," said he, "the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."† It is the same power which Paul declared is to them which are called — "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."‡ To follow, however, the synonyms, which all mean the same, would be to copy the most of John's Gospel, and much of the Epistles, and other books of the Holy Scriptures. The terms all agree as to the substance, whether Christ speaks personifying God, as the Word from the beginning; or concerning his church, as the head and leader; or the Apostles mention it as Christ within, the Holy Ghost, and by other names.

* John i. 4, 5.

† Ibid, xiv. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 24.

It is the same power which Adam lost by transgression, and in consequence died spiritually. In the account, this state of death is again represented by his expulsion from Eden, and that lively type of the soul's regeneration—the cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Under this flaming sword—the word of God—quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, must man pass to regain the tree of life. In other words, he must be born again—be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire to consume all but what is pure, in order that he may come into the Gospel dispensation, which is beyond Adam—the state of Christ, who never fell.

This power, or inspeaking Word of God, has ever been dispensed to each and every individual severally, however low his state, until the day of visitation has passed over, and all hope of redemption is lost. It was the spiritual rock that followed Israel in the wilderness, and of which they drank.* However subject to the

* 1 Cor. x. 4.

outward law, yet they were individually accountable, with all other men, for what they had severally received. Some, both before and after the institution of the Law, as is testified of Abraham, saw the day of Christ, and were glad.* But by far the bulk of every age and generation, from the fall of Adam down to the time in which we live, never reached the innermost sanctuary of the spiritual temple. They have voluntarily dwelt in the outer court, saying to some outward guide in the language of conduct, as did the Israelites formerly to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." †

The Apostle Peter illustrates this doctrine, when, in addressing those who had obtained like precious faith with him, he recounts to them what he saw upon the mount of transfiguration, and the voice he heard from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and adds:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy;

* John viii. 56.

† Ex. xx. 19.

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts :

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.”* For, as he states in the next verse, “the prophecy came not in old time by the *will of man* : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ;” and it necessarily follows that it is not of *private* interpretation, or by the will of man, but by the same spirit which gave it forth.

This more sure word of prophecy—the light shining in the dark heart of man, and but too rarely comprehended—is here placed beyond all outward testimony, as more certain than the evidence of the senses themselves. It is the same light—although the day of the gospel has not dawned in the soul, yet struggling under the clouds and darkness of outward systems, and forms, and ceremonies—yet in the bondage of the Law to the superstitions and prejudices

* 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

of nature and education—which, as it is minded, will bring the brightness of Christ's dawn, and the glory of his meridian day.

The gospel dispensation, wherein, to those that look for him, Christ appears the second time without sin unto salvation,* that is, not in the body (for which sin is sometimes used as a synonym), consists in the restoration of the order in which man was created. The government, in all things, being laid upon the shoulder of that new birth in the soul, the son given, whose name (which is his power) shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.†

Under it, the spirit is brought into subjection to God immediately—the will of the creature being crucified or nailed, as it were, hand and foot, and the whole man subservient to the will of Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Infinite Goodness. The elder, which, since the fall, is

* Heb. ix. 28.

† Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

the first-born, is made to serve the younger, or that which is born of the Spirit. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* In like manner the two sons of Abraham, the first of the bond woman born after the flesh, the other of a free woman by promise, are an allegory representing the two covenants—the one answering to Jerusalem under the Law, which is in bondage with her children; the other to Jerusalem which is above, and free, the mother of us all.† The experience of the Apostle is a truth which all time will verify, that he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit.

The gospel dispensation, in point of time, succeeded the Law when, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended under the outward symbol of cloven tongues, as of fire. It was, nevertheless, that in which man was created, and from which he fell by spiritual death. As he comes into the world in this latter state (for death reigns from Adam to Moses), he

* Rom. ix. 12, 13.

† Gal. iv. 22-26.

must first receive the Law as a schoolmaster, and remain under tutors and governors, *i. e.* outward teaching, till the time appointed of the Father. In this condition he may, like the Apostle Paul, live in all good conscience, though a persecutor of the church of Christ. When, however, in the fulness of time, that is, when prepared for it, the Father shall reveal his Son, and take away the scales of blindness from the eyes, the stony nature from the heart—when he shall undergo that change which he must recognize and cannot resist—when, convicted of sin, he is forced to cry, “A Saviour, or I die,” “A Redeemer, or I perish forever”—then it is that, as to the young man formerly, who asked what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life, the unalterable terms are made known—the perfect surrender of all to the Divine will. At that juncture, he that keeps his life and turns away sorrowful, shall lose the eternal life he seeks; and he who loses his life in all that hinders his spiritual progress, shall find in lieu of it that life eternal which is hid with Christ in God. Henceforward, he is one with Christ and with

the Father—having his own natural will crucified—and comes, by adoption, to the condition of a son of God, and joint heir with Christ.

Among the last injunctions of our Lord to his disciples, was this: “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.”* At no stage is the caution more necessary than when the soul has passed into the inner temple—the holy of holies—there to receive forever the law and commandment directly from God. The sea of glass mingled with fire, which John saw in the visions of light, is perfectly typical of the Christian’s path—he is ever liable to slip and be consumed. Without absolute faith in his unerring guide, when temptation comes he may wander back, as did the Galatians, to the Law, and become entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Nay, he may transgress wilfully, and thus count the blood (or life) of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite unto the spirit of grace. In this rebellion, it is impossible for such “to renew them again unto

* Mark xiii. 37.

repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* The penalty, as in the case of Adam, is death. Wilful transgression, under the law of outward commandments, may be *atoned* for and forgiven; under the gospel dispensation, it cannot, for it is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, who shall limit the goodness and mercy of God, though the last state of such a man is far worse and more hopeless than the first!

* Heb. vi. 6.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE CHURCH.

THUS far, I have directed my examination to the original and subsequent state of man, with a view to rightly elucidate the subject, and discharge the duty imposed in this work. It is impossible to comprehend a part of so vast a theme, without some idea of its relation to the whole, as displayed by that whole itself. I have, therefore, considered the position in which I stand, as an immortal soul to be saved or lost, by an inquiry into the cause of my present condition—what I had in my ancestor at the creation, and what now I have not, that renders me so sensible of my spiritual want. In developing the cause which has produced this state of death and darkness, with the means appointed for redemption from its bondage, I have but prefaced that inquiry which a perusal of the book

I first named, viz.: "The End of Religious Controversy," renders absolutely necessary. For in this work, the author, Dr. Milner, maintains with no little ingenuity and astuteness, that the Roman Catholic communion, of which the Pope is head, has exclusive claim to be the Church of Christ. I perfectly agree with him in the axiom that out of the Church there is no salvation; but I deny that the community of men for whom he claims that title, forms what is, as an unit, properly called the Church of Christ. Every individual of the human race, with capacity to examine the subject, is directly and most vitally interested in the question; for on the correctness or the falsity of his theory depends, in the mind capable of making it, that choice which must lead to righteousness and peace, or to delusion and misery.

What is the true church of Christ may be better understood by showing what is not. I propose therefore, to demonstrate that the Roman Catholic communion, an outwardly organized body of men with the Pope at its head, is not the true church. I concede no ground, of any

kind or character, for the present or past assumption of the title; and herein I hope to be more consistent than his antagonist, the Protestant Bishop I have named, who, in a qualified manner, admits the claim, and asks for his own organization an equal or superior participation in it.

I have endeavoured to exhibit the clear, comprehensive and scriptural history of the creation and fall of man, with its consequences. The latter I have shown to be almost uniform. His tendency to darkness and spiritual bondage is written indelibly upon every page of the chronicle. The proof that he escaped, and formed an exception to this general rule, after the crucifixion of the Son of God and martyrdom of nearly all his apostles, will indeed demonstrate him in a new phase of character.

We have no evidence, however, of such a state of things. On the contrary, we find the apostles themselves sliding back into the beggarly elements of an outward dispensation, and labouring continually to correct the same weakness in others. The light of the gospel dawned

but gradually, even on the understandings of men who had heard it preached, throughout a long period, by him who spake as never man spake. It required a miracle to convince Peter that God is no respecter of persons—and, even in the exercise of his supposed apostolic primacy, he was reproved by Paul, who never had that outward commission which is considered necessary to constitute the title of an episcopal functionary in the church.

The fundamental error of both the controversialists to whose works I propose a supplement, is the analogy by which they claim to identify their respective hierarchies, as the church of Christ. Thus Dr. Milner says: “If a prince is desirous of showing his title to a throne, or a nobleman or gentleman his claim to an estate, he fails not to exhibit his genealogical table, and to trace his pedigree up to some personage, whose right to it was unquestionable. I shall adopt the same precise method on the present occasion, by sending your society a slight sketch of our *apostolical tree*, by which they will see, at a glance, an abridgement of the succession of

our chief bishops in the apostolical see of Rome, from St. Peter up to the present edifying pontiff, Pius VII., as likewise that of other illustrious doctors, prelates and saints who have defended the apostolical doctrine by their preaching and writings, or who have illustrated it by their lives.”* In the commencement of this genealogical tree, he states that:—“Within the first century from the birth of Christ, this long expected Messiah founded the kingdom of his holy church in Judea, and chose his apostles to propagate the same throughout the earth, over whom he appointed Simon as the *centre of union and head pastor*; charging him to feed his whole flock, sheep as well as lambs, giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven and changing his name into that of Peter, or Rock: adding, *on this rock I will build my church.*”† He then deduces title downwards through his successors, as an heir would from his ancestor, in claiming an estate—the only difference being, that it descends from one incumbent to another by virtue of the office, and not because of in-

* Page 168.

† Ibid.

heritable blood. In this respect the analogy fails which he instances, as also that derived from its prototype, the Jewish priesthood.

His antagonist, Bishop Hopkins, leaving this principle untouched, because his own pretensions are based on it, attacks the primacy or head pastorship claimed for the apostle and the see of Rome. And, in a long review of ecclesiastical history drawn from Roman Catholic authors, shows breaks enough in the chain of descent to damage its validity before any impartial court and jury—to say nothing of the loathsome mass of human depravity through which the vicar of Christ must receive his inheritance. Through this long line, including many, very many of as corrupt, hypocritical, and wicked men, if we may judge by their acts, as the world ever saw, the pure doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ, have, by the Roman Catholic hypothesis, been received down to the present time, by *oral tradition*.* The salvation of my immortal soul de-

* The End of Religious Controversy, Letter X., page 54.

pend, therefore, on my believing as the infallible truth, what has been told from man to man through eighteen centuries — the most part of them, plunged in the gloom of mediæval darkness.

Before proceeding to take up the texts of scripture on which rests the whole of this wonderful fabric, I must advert to the merits of its rival, the church of England, as put forth by the bishop above named. As above stated, it also claims outward apostolic succession,* principally through the Roman Catholic church from which it was violently separated in the reign of Henry VIII.; collaterally, I infer, through certain British Bishops in the sixth century. Its champion does not, however, ground it exclusively on the dogma of outward succession. It would appear, from his exposition, to partake of a mixed character, springing directly from the same root and growing from the same tree, yet drawing sustenance from

* End of Controversy Controverted, Letter XXIII., vol. I. page 435.

neither. The Roman Catholic denies vitality to any branch, which his specific outward church has severed from the trunk:—it is thereafter dead, and must ever remain so, unless reingrafted upon the parent stock. Admitting the premises, the Episcopal Bishop differs in his conclusion, and is driven substantially from the doctrine of the outward succession to the enlarged definition of the Church of Christ, to develop which more fully is the object of these pages. I may confess that he has offered me a better apology for the origin of his church, than I had before met with. Yet, notwithstanding the respectable footing on which it is placed, I am still convinced that politics had much more to do with it than principle—I must regard it as I ever have, a state transfer of an anti-christian hierarchy, with as much of the golden cup of its abominations as could possibly be conveyed in the change. Its whole organization, as a political engine, is perfectly compatible with the aristocratic government of Great Britain. But how its strange anomalies can be reconciled, in any mind, with the republican in-

stitutions under which we live, is to me an insoluble problem.

It matters little what the commands of Christ were to his immediate apostles, and through them to others, unless he who alleges authority to act in virtue thereof, can produce the seals of his commission. The Roman Catholic endeavors to do this in a few, and, principally, two scripture texts—after which he runs into the boundless field of speculative opinion, among men who had mostly the same outward interest with himself to uphold. The first, and foundation text, is taken from the gospel of Matthew, where Christ asked “Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee,

That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”*

This is the starting link of that chain of title, by which the Pope of Rome claims from Christ, as lineal successor of Peter, to stand his vicar on earth, with supreme spiritual power over all men, both in this world and that which is to come. And, truly, if the world never saw so vast an empire over the actions of men as its assumption created, it never yet witnessed so baseless a foundation for usurped authority. In its most literal, and perhaps strongest, aspect for the claim, it hangs upon a quibble, or play upon words, in the mouth of the Saviour. The text of Matthew stands alone and unsupported. Mark relates the commencing dialogue,† and ends the whole subject with Peter's confession,

* Matt. xvi. 13-19.

† Mark viii. 27, 8, 9.

"Thou art the Christ." Luke substantially does the same in fewer words, and John is altogether silent about it. If the consequences, which have been justified from the above quoted text, had been intended, we can hardly believe it would have stood the solitary voucher for a claim of universal empire in all that chiefly concerns man. Especially would we expect some notice of so important an event, when we remember that the beloved disciple wrote his gospel long after the others had been promulgated, and at a period when heresies had rendered outward authority, if it existed as claimed, sufficiently conspicuous for his perception.

Bishop Hopkins, in his "End of Controversy Converted," * shows a distinction between the words used in the original Greek. That properly translated *Rock* differing from Peter, which means, *a stone*. He then adduces a number of passages from the Old Testament, in which the word *Rock* is figuratively applied to the Deity—

* Vol. I. page 437.

and from the New Testament to prove its application to Christ — concluding, as the result of his examination, with this paraphrase on the words of the Redeemer. “Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for thou hast acknowledged in me the divine and Almighty Rock of Israel. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art a stone, a living, precious stone, which shall be set, along with thy fellows, in the twelve foundations of my celestial city. For, on the Rock which thou hast confessed I will so build my church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, for thou shalt be the first to open the church by the power of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. And on all the other foundation stones in my heavenly city I will bestow the same high privileges. For on them, together with thee, after my great sacrifice is

accomplished, and I have risen in triumph from the dead, I will breathe the breath of my divine power, and then will I fulfil my promise, by saying to all my chosen Apostles, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*

This fanciful interpretation of the text to show that the outward succession in Christ's church was given the twelve apostles, proves too much; for in the case of the Apostle Paul, to whom was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision, a thirteenth foundation in the celestial city would be required. In fact, the manner in which this great apostle was called, is not only, as the Bishop expresses it, “decisive of the whole question about Peter's imaginary supremacy,” but of the outward succession itself; since the commission was by revelation, resisted at first by the other disciples, and acknowledged when demonstrated by the power that went with it. I must therefore reject this imaginary

* Vol. I. page 441.

speech, and confine my strictures to the very clear distinction he has drawn from the text, between Peter, a stone, and Christ the Rock, on which his church was to be built.

When Peter “answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,” “Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” The contrast is here as strongly made as can be, between the outward speech and tradition of men, and the inward revelation of God. It is the outward speech and traditions of men, upon which rests the whole church structure of both these controvertists. Through flesh and blood alone, here synonymous with men, they respectively claim authority as commissioned ministers of the gospel of Christ. But flesh and blood did not, nor could it, reveal unto Peter or any other apostle or man, the truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was only by the revelation of the Father, in perfect accordance with what he elsewhere says, “No man can come to me,

except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him :”* that the knowledge of Christ could be obtained.

To elucidate the distinction, I may open at random upon almost any few lines in John’s gospel, or, indeed, the epistles generally. I take the first my eye rests on : “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.”†

Here is a parallel which furnishes the key, if any were wanting, to unlock the meaning of the former saying. “Destroy this temple,”—that is, the man before you—“and in three days I will raise it up.” What I is this? Not the man whose natural life was taken, and whose body buried, any more than in the first case it was the man; for of the man he said, “I can of mine own self do nothing”‡—of course, neither build my church, nor raise my body to life. In

* John vi. 44.

† Ibid, ii. 19–21.

‡ Ibid, v. 30.

both, the man was the temple — He personified the Word—"Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God"*—"Christ the truth and the life"—"the living God"—the Holy Ghost, of whom it is declared "Ye are the temple"†—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."‡ In fact, to rehearse the various names used for that divine birth in the soul, whereby man is made a new creature, and the son of God by adoption, would require more space than could be allotted in this work. It was on this revelation of himself as one with the Father, the Eternal Rock in every soul fitted to receive him, that Christ declared he would build his church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

The parallel passage of Scripture introduced in the latter part of the above paraphrase, relates that Jesus, on the day of his resurrection, at evening, "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

† Ibid, iii. 16, 17—vi. 19.

‡ Col. i. 27.

And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." *

The inference here is, that they did not receive the Holy Ghost at that time. They were shut up *for fear of the Jews*. On the contrary, when, at the day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they preached the Gospel publicly, freely, and fearlessly. The apostle had previously stated that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*,† connecting its gift with the glorification as a preceding cause.

In the first quotation, it was revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living

* John xx. 19-23.

† John vii. 39.

God. Yet Peter certainly had not then received the Holy Ghost; for notwithstanding the revelation, he denied him, which, had he received it, would have involved that blasphemy not to be forgiven. Again, Jesus told him with the others, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter (which is the Holy Ghost) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."* So dependent were they on him outwardly, that, by his own assurance, the Holy Spirit would not come till he was taken away.

It is manifest, therefore, as is substantially stated in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that while Jesus was with them, they were under the Law. Although he had "blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,"† yet they still looked to him in the flesh as he then was, raised from the sepulchre, and being to them little other than he had been before. The

* John xvi. 7.

† Col. ii. 14.

Holy Ghost was not given till he, the end of the Law, had departed, and was received out of their sight.

The commission then, in both instances, to remit and retain sins on earth and in heaven, was coupled with the gift of the Holy Ghost. In either case, our Saviour spoke as referring to their future state when it should have descended upon them. On this rock (Christ) I *will* build my church, and I *will* give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven—that is, of God, which, he declared, “is within you.”*

When a man is born again of water (which is John’s baptism, that of repentance), and of the spirit, which is Christ’s, the finisher of the Law), he can (and does) enter the kingdom of God.† In this kingdom, God reigns supreme. The will of the creature is crucified, slain, and buried. Man is made a son of God by adoption, and joint heir with Christ,‡ the only begotten Son. In this state, he is again redeemed from the fallen nature, and the Holy Spirit of God

* Luke xvii. 21. † John iii. 5. ‡ Rom. viii. 17.

descends upon the soul, its guide and governor forever. He then becomes *a stone* in Christ's spiritual church. As he hears of Christ, the power of God revealed within, he judges; and his judgment is just, because he seeks not his own will. He judges not according to the appearance of outward things and circumstances; but, from the wisdom of God, judges righteous judgment. Whatever, therefore, he binds on earth, is bound in heaven; or looses on earth, is loosed in heaven. The *infallible* church of which he is a member, and Christ the Head, is one, holy, universal — the same in the beginning, now, and forever.

Having thus disposed of the principal foundation of the outward hierarchy, I proceed to examine the other passage of Scripture cited to prove the commission of the church to Peter. It is as follows: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of

Jonas, lovest thou me? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”*

This text, taken in connection with what is recorded elsewhere, requires very little elucidation. It amounts to nothing more than an impressive and affecting exhortation to a warm-hearted but unstable follower. The character of Peter was impulsive and rash—as dangerous at times to the cause he espoused, as it was effective and serviceable when rightly directed. His affectionate attachment to the person of his Lord rendered him, no doubt, an object of solicitude; but his ill-governed zeal might prove detrimental to the great mission. He rebuked the Master for his prophecy, for which he in

* John xxi. 15-17.

turn was righteously rebuked by the severe expression, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."* He slept on the watch in Gethsemane—cut off the ear of the high priest's servant—and, despite his vehement boast, thrice denied him in the extremity of his need. Is not the verse in Luke on this last occasion, a sufficient key to the earnest exhortations above quoted? "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."† Nay, even at this last solemn interview, when, according to Dr. Milner, the whole church, "sheep as well as lambs," was turned over to him and his successors in office at Rome, we find him afterwards rebuked as an officious intermeddler. Wanting to know "What shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will

* Mark viii. 33.

† Luke xxii. 61-2.

that he tarry till I come, what is *that* to thee. Follow thou me.”*

It affords a melancholy evidence of human depravity to find language, so obvious in its import, wrested to bolster up the iniquitous theories of man's ambition. Frail indeed must be the materials, and still more scanty than frail, which his covetousness would glean from the sayings or doings of our blessed Lord, to warrant his unhallowed aims. Yet few and frail as they are, they suffice for the purpose. Superstition and slavish fear crouch readily to the tyrannous yoke of priestcraft. In all its forms and phases, this prospers with the mass, because it panders to the natural will, the natural desires in man. To deny self, to take up the daily cross, and follow, in meekness and humility, the path of a crucified Saviour, is not so palatable as to be amused and deceived with false theories, that make religion an empty confession of words, and godliness an outward routine of ceremonies. It still, alas! remains to

* John xxi. 22.

be a truth, and I fear, from all indications, will long remain so; that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." *

* Matt. vii. 13, 14.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE CHURCH—(CONTINUED).

IN Webster's Dictionary, we find no less than ten definitions to this term. I shall not enter into a critical disquisition as to its import. The subject of inquiry with us, is, what did Christ mean by the church he declared should be built by him on the Rock—which I have shown to be the revelation of God in the soul of man. We must turn to the sacred history for its clear elucidation. Paul says, that God "gave him (Christ), to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."* And throughout this epistle to the Ephesians, he illustrates the subject in so copious a manner, that I may scarcely quote by verses, but refer to the whole. The

* Eph. i. 22-3.

substance, however, is every where the same, and confirmatory of what he there depicts it, the spouse of Christ—and elsewhere calls it, the “house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* The house of God, under the Law, was outward and figurative. The shekinah—the visible glory—was there. But, under the gospel dispensation, all these outward figures are spiritual truths. Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, that he might know how to “behave himself in the house of God.” If he had stopped there, we might have a precedent for one ordinary meaning of the word church, viz: a building used for Divine Worship. But he explained the term in such a manner, that it can be conveyed by no idea predicated of outward things. No council, or synod, or assembly, that ever sat, no society that was ever organized, or community that ever existed, can be identified as the “pillar and ground of the truth.”

The language used by our Saviour, in pointing

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

out the method of settling differences, may be thought to conflict with this negative definition. Let us examine the text, and see what is the highly practical value belonging to his injunction. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

* Matt. xviii. 15-20.

In this last passage of the quotation, we have the general apostolic acceptation of the meaning attached to the word church. Where two or more are gathered together in the name of Christ, there he is as the head and they are as the body. This is the *visible* Church of Christ. The name is a synonym for the power. Even in secular assemblies convened under the warrant of one in authority, a king or a ruler, his name sanctions its proceedings only by virtue of the power he delegates. So it is in the congregations of God's people met together, not to do their own but their Master's will. When the high priest and his kindred asked, in reference to the miracle on the impotent man, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Peter answered, "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,"* thus showing the two to be convertible terms. So Paul declares, that God hath "given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

* Acts iv. 7, 10.

earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Does he mean that when the name is pronounced by human lips, there shall be a genuflection, and that confession shall be audibly with the tongue? This would stultify not only the text here, but that of the same import in Isaiah. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”†

It is the power, therefore, in which the church, whether of two or two hundred, for numbers matter not, is gathered together, that constitutes it. The will of man has no place but in subjection to Christ, the head, who is present in the midst. Its judgment is infallible—what it binds is bound, and what it looses is loosed in heaven. What it agrees on touching any thing is done

* Phil. ii. 10.

† Isaiah xlv. 22, 23.

in heaven, for all that it asks is of the will of Christ, one with God the Father. This is the holy Apostolic Church—and such is the import of the term in the New Testament, whenever, as the organ of Christ, his authority is coupled with it. I may be told that of his apostles one was a devil, and others are exhibited as but fallible, and sometimes very erring men. That Peter and Judas might have agreed in opposition to Christ—that the contention between Paul and Barnabas was so sharp that they departed asunder one from the other;* and that the decision of what is commonly considered the first council† of the church, would appear to us somewhat puerile, after its members had been taught in person by the Head, and commissioned by so remarkable an outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, the doctrine is indisputably true, and the authority for it is from the fountain and not the streams. The sayings and the doings, the spirit and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, are worth more

* Acts xv. 39.

† Ibid. 20.

to the human family, than all its accumulated treasures of learning and literature, drawn from a countless host of fallible authorities. The instruction they convey is eminently practical, and conducive to our true temporal as well as eternal interests. Never man spake like him—never man lived like him. And whoever will seek wisdom, must receive in simplicity and singleness, his doctrine. Whoever will attain happiness, must follow his footsteps in the path of self-denial, irrespective of the opinions and the contradictions of men.

The test, by which to know the church, is its power—not physically, nor politically, nor even morally—for all these may be possessed by men, and yet the holy name of Christ be denied, or in the strong scripture term, blasphemed. Christ gave the criterion by which false prophets may be known, viz: by their fruits.* The Apostle John tells the brethren to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone

* Matt. vii. 16.

out into the world. Hereby knew ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.”* He then states the converse, and explains the difference between the Spirit of Christ and Anti-christ. The fifteenth verse contains the substance of the whole doctrine: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” Can any one suppose that the confession here meant, is a confession of the tongue? Is it not obvious to the simplest comprehension, that the confession is of the heart to God? Most certainly, however, all that was written of Jesus Christ outwardly, will be confessed before men, and not only in speech, but in conduct, by that heart which confesseth that he *is* come in the flesh. That he is come a Saviour from sin, a Redeemer from all the spiritual bondage of human traditions, and inventions, to introduce the soul into the glorious liberty of the children of God. In the maintenance of that confession, “God

* 1 John iv. 1-2.

dwelleth in him, and he in God," as man was originally created.

The Apostle Paul tells the church at Corinth, in illustrating the hidden *wisdom* of God, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."* With such, vain would be every effort to set forth a clear idea of the Church of Christ. But I think it very possible to show what it is not. I have no controversy with the members of any sect or community, except so far as they claim the right to direct me in the way of salvation, and to bind on me what I know to be spiritual burdens. Their assumption of a title affects me but little—but when doctrines are published as gospel truths, subversive of the religion I profess, as the only hope of my redemption, then the case is widely different. I must judge and decide whether their promulgators are true or false prophets. If true, they are the messengers of the

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Highest, and it were better that a mill-stone were hanged about my neck, and that I were drowned in the depth of the sea, than that, by opposing them, I should offend the Majesty they represent. If false, and erring wilfully, they are impostors of the deepest dye — for to gain to themselves a temporary advantage in this life, they would entangle me, through sophistry and superstition, and hazard my ruin, both body and soul.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE MINISTRY.

“CHRIST’S last commission to his apostles,” says Dr. Milner,* “was this: *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world.* Matt. xxviii. 20. Now the event has proved, as I have already observed, that the apostles, themselves, were only to live the ordinary term of man’s life; therefore, the commission of preaching and ministering, together with the promise of the Divine assistance, regards the successors of the apostles, no less than the apostles themselves. This proves that there must have been an uninterrupted series of such successors of the apostles in every age since

* End of Controversy, Letter XXVIII.

their time, that is to say, successors to their *doctrine*, to their *jurisdiction*, to their *orders*, and to their *mission*. Hence it follows that no religious society whatever, which cannot trace its succession, in these four points, up to the apostles, has any claim to the characteristic title, Apostolical."

From what is above predicated in regard to the church, it will be seen that the last inference, to prove an outward succession of pastors, ordained one of another and instructed one of another to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded, is purely gratuitous. It is true that the charge to those then about him, will, to a certain extent, include all who were to succeed in their mission. But it is not true that the command, even to them, was without qualification — for they were expressly told to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high.* In the concluding part Christ says, Lo ! I am with you always. Surely this *power*, which is the Com-

* Luke xxiv. 49.

forter, the Holy Ghost, Christ within, had something to do with the commission. But if it was merely by word of mouth, to tell others what they had outwardly heard of him, (and this is the Roman Catholic doctrine of tradition,) then I grant the conclusion as deducible from the premises. In the foregoing chapter, I have shown his exposition of the church, and his promise, in accordance with that above to his ministers, — “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Of course, to “the end of the world,” as he is with his messengers. But no disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, any more than his commissioned minister to preach the everlasting gospel, ever received the power to confess or to baptize, without first tarrying at Jerusalem — “a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.”* This Jerusalem is that state of the soul’s rest, wherein it

* Isaiah xxxiii. 20.

waits submissively to receive power from on high, and to do the Master's will.

Christ declared of his own mission, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* In sending the twelve apostles, he limited them to the same circuit, with the charge, "freely ye have received, freely give;"† and the assurance "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."‡ Again, when the Law was ended, like limited allotments were made by the Power that commissioned the apostles. To Peter was committed the gospel of the circumcision, and to Paul that of the uncircumcision,§ to say nothing of the latter's call, altogether, by the Spirit. I conclude, therefore, that they who teach without waiting for power from on high, and without the specific command from Christ, who is always with his church and his ministers, are of the class who run without being sent, and who prophesy without being spoken to.||

The Apostle Peter says, "As every man hath

* Matt. xv. 24.

† Ibid. x. 6-8.

‡ Ibid. 20.

§ Gal. ii. 7.

|| Jer. xxiii. 21.

received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God: if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ:”* and Paul gave the church at Corinth to understand “that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”†

When the multitude, on the day of Pentecost, mocked the apostles, Peter told them—“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God), I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit: and they shall prophesy.”‡

The evangelical prophet Isaiah, evidently in

* 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

† 1 Cor. xii. 3.

‡ Acts ii. 16-18.

reference to the gospel dispensation, states that "thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."* This is in correspondence with the testimony of the Apostle John: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."† And again: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."‡

Scripture texts may be multiplied to prove the doctrine here set forth. It is the same laid down by Christ to his apostles: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your

* Isaiah xxx. 20-1.

† 1 John ii. 27.

‡ Ibid, 20.

remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*

I ask now, in view of these emphatic truths, and of the whole concurrent testimony of the righteous in all generations, from what source is the doctrine that man may ordain and commission his fellow-worm to preach the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Let us examine the motives which have grafted so poisonous a shoot upon the true vine. Christ commanded his disciples, “Freely ye have received, freely give.” Paul was very solicitous that he might not make the gospel chargeable.† His own hands ministered to his necessities, and to them that were with him.‡ It is true that, in the ninth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he quotes from the law of Moses to show that “they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple: and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar.” “Even so,” says he, “hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gos-

* John xiv. 26.

† 2 Cor. xi. 9, 1 Thes. ii. 9, 2 Thes. iii. 8. ‡ Acts xx. 34.

pel should live of the gospel"—verses 13, 14. Few passages have been more "wrested" to selfish purposes than this, although very easily understood from what follows. The train of reasoning he adopts, leads to a conclusion he repudiates expressly in his own practice, and that, too, in the strongest terms—"It were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void." Peter's testimony is still stronger when rebuking Simon the sorcerer, who had believed and been baptized; the latter desired the power to confer the Holy Ghost, and would have paid for his education as a minister—"Thy money perish with thee," said the apostle, "because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."*

I have shown before, that every member of Christ's church, out of which there is no salvation, must have his will in subjection to its holy Head, and, as a consequence, be like passive clay, to be moulded, and fashioned, and fitted in the spiritual house, as seemeth good to the

* Acts viii. 9-20.

heavenly architect. When we refer to the present and past state of what the controvertists I have spoken of, respectively call "the church," it will not be difficult to discover that covetousness and ambition have built up the incongruous structures so elaborately defended in their works. I shall do little more than refer to these for a description of the colossal, but baseless images, whose deformity they have severally unveiled. Their type may be found in that which King Nebuchadnezzar beheld, with a head of fine gold, breast and arms of silver, but legs and feet of iron and clay.

In the one, the chief pastor affects to call himself the servant of servants, but substantially claims to be lord of lords, and king of kings.* With the imaginary keys of St. Peter to open or to close the gates of Paradise upon whom he will, his aim has ever been, and most successfully, to reign on earth in all the gorgeous trappings of temporal greatness. Least of all men could the pontiff of Rome, such as he appears

* See End of Controversy Controverted, Lett. XLII., Vol. II., page 338.

to us on the page of history, vouch his position and his works in proof, as a follower of him who was meek and lowly in heart. As we investigate the rise and progress of his vast empire over the governments of this world, we discover, in the machinery employed, the secret both of its motives and its success. It succeeded, by a systematic course of tactics imitative of the world's conquerors, in separating from the mass an army, outside of, and unaffected by the general interests of mankind. He who will permanently enlist men in a cause antagonistic to the peace and welfare of the community, must first sever the links which bind his instruments in the bosom of society as constituent portions. Such is the only mode practically effective in the consolidation of military power. The soldier is detached from the social ties of family and kindred; and by pandering to his animal appetites, by still further debasing the naturally depraved tendencies of his mind, by creating new and abnormal interests in his breast, he is made the servile, unquestioning, and effective tool of ambition. So, by the prohibition

of marriage to its clergy, the Roman hierarchy sundered effectually the bond of union between it and the human family at large. I have before shown the rottenness of the foundation whereon the whole structure rests. It is not, therefore, surprising that a few random passages from the epistles of Paul, wherein he spoke confessedly of himself, and not by commandment, together with forced analogies drawn from figurative illustrations elsewhere, should be ample warrant, in such hands, for this mortal blow at the strongest bond of society, and the surest pledge of its welfare. Without such a prohibition, that vast body of cosmopolites, the Roman Catholic priesthood, comprising every variety of opinions and modes of action, and covering every species of iniquity which would tend to the increase of their power, could never have been created and maintained.

I am willing to concede as much of purity to its offspring, the so-called Church of England, as its political origin and the temper of the times will warrant. But reformed as it is, in many respects, and enlarged as are the principles

which regulate its intercourse with rival communities, it owes its freedom from the most revolting doctrines of the parent, more to outward circumstances, than to the honest search after truth. It is Romanism substantially, but in a different dress, to suit the refinement and the pride of independence which characterize Englishmen. I am amused, while I am instructed, in observing the contrast of temper throughout this family quarrel. All the acerbity mutually displayed in holding up the deformities of rival claimants to the same lineage, ends in petty issues on the veriest trifles that can occupy the attention of a serious mind. The supremacy of Peter over the other apostles, involves, it is true, the question of political chieftainship. The motives which prompted Henry VIII. to break asunder the bond that linked his kingdom with the Papacy, are important so far as they affect the origin of the Anglican church. But the administration of the cup to the laity, the number of the sacraments, the distinction between consubstantiation and transubstantiation, with other like frivolous

questions, seem but small matters to call forth such an amount of controversy. Yet, in their hot disputes as to the manner of tything mint, anise, and cummin, they are perfectly agreed about the paramount importance of its being done. Amid all the crimination and recrimination, it is evident, as was manifested in the correspondence between Archbishop Wake and the Doctors of the Sorbonne, appended to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, that fraternal love and unity would be perfectly restored by a satisfactory settlement of the outward patrimony.

I have said before, in substance, that it was to me a problem how republicans can reconcile the inconsistencies of this aristocratic institution, with the forms of government under which we live. It may be proper to enlarge a little at this stage of the inquiry. Will it be denied that the divine right of kings to govern, and the divine right of bishops to rule, have their origin from one and the same source? Are they not the twin conception of superstition and craft? They were born, and have lived and flourished, side by side, the banded scourges of mankind, in

royal despotism and papal supremacy. Their strength was greatly crippled on the soil of our ancestors, in the change to a constitutional monarchy and a reformed church. In our own free and Christian polity, they are both happily dead and buried — would I could hope, forever! — as axioms of wisdom in the control of human affairs. But nevertheless, parts of the community still cherish the form of one, and thereby render themselves inconsistent, in practice, with their principles. It is no more self-evident that “all men are created equal,” than that all have equal access to God. Nay, the former is but an abstract political truth, and if applied to our condition as we come into the world, altogether false in fact. Whereas, from the very attributes of Deity, the unequivocal testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and the spontaneous outcry of his creature everywhere, and in all ages, the latter is not susceptible of a doubt. Why, then, deny that the Christian church is a pure democracy, if such a term may be used to illustrate the condition of its members as equal? Why establish, or rather continue, from the effete and corrupt

institutions of England and Rome, the orders, the titles, and the honors, which are as repugnant to the genius of republicanism as they are opposed to the express commands of Christ?

It seems hardly necessary to make quotations to prove a matter so familiar to every reader of the gospels; but lest any should feel a doubt about the fact, and be unable to refer readily to the texts, I offer a few instances in point. Speaking of the scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat under the Law, his degenerate but still recognized outward successors, Jesus told his disciples that they loved distinction, and to be called of men Rabbi. "But," said he, "be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant."* Again, when the young man applied the term Good Master, Jesus

* Matt. xxiii. 8-11.

rebuked him with the question, "Why callest thou me good?" and the asseveration "There is none good but one, that is God."* On another occasion, he said to the Jews, "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"†

This last text is very significant, for Christ had just referred them to their Scriptures (which, though wrested to suit their purposes, were held up by them as an infallible test), in order to prove his mission. Their condition is ascribed, in the query, to its true cause.

If I mistake not, the *official* style or title of an English Bishop, is "Most reverend father in God." The letters of the American Bishop are addressed to "The *most reverend* Francis Patrick Kenrick, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore." How far this flattering title conflicts with the dignity of a citizen of our republic, and the duty of a professed disciple of Christ, as shown in the foregoing quotations, must be left for the reader to judge.

* Mark x. 18.

† John v. 44.

I shall not embellish my argument with a superfluous account of that national church from which his is derived, and its enormous revenues wrenched by law from all ; but proceed to examine the position of a minister under the less objectionable *voluntary* system of payment, as we find it here.

Every man who has to earn a livelihood for himself and family, undertakes the study of some business or profession, in order to exchange the product of his labor for the subsistence and the comforts he requires. If he gain a knowledge of medicine, his services are worth the consideration for which he offers them to the community, as a healer of diseases. If an acquaintance with the laws is obtained, he barter it fairly for the requisite share of common property, and gives a *quid pro quo* for that he receives. But I deny that there is value given in preaching a sermon, performing a rite, or visiting a parishioner, for money. It is true that the ear may be gratified with an eloquent discourse, the educational scruples may be relieved by an outward ceremony, and the feelings solaced in a profes-

sional call. But the object is not, as in the other cases, to be gained by the purchased services. By the advice and assistance of the lawyer or physician, I may recover, respectively, my property or my health. I know that the means I employ are directly adapted to the end in view. I pay them for something real, which their professional studies have enabled them to give. But it is not so in regard to the counsel I may buy for the salvation of my immortal soul. All the linguists, the logicians, and the orators in the world, could they concentrate their energies, would not suffice to impart the "grace of God that bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to all men."*

So far is this from being the case, that the means thus used have a direct tendency to frustrate the object I profess to aim at. I feel myself in want of spiritual help—am desirous of attaining a state of security as to the course best adapted to reach the haven of peace and bliss—I know that my stay here is but short, and I

* Titus ii. 11.

have the inward consciousness of an eternity hereafter—I *must* find that *certain* rule spoken of at the commencement of this work, which will guide me to rest. Well! surely when the land is filled with ready counsellors, I need not go far to seek it. Here is the associate of Dr. Milner, with his advertisement, “The End of Religious Controversy,” to satisfy my doubts. The one holy, catholic, and apostolical church is before you, says he; the doors are open—nothing so easy as to enter, profess your allegiance, and settle your scruples forever. Here is her genealogy—you see the title deduced straight from Christ down to the “present edifying pontiff of Rome”—and here is my commission under his seal, with the fisherman’s ring, to bind or to loose you on earth and in heaven. “In fact, no inquiry is so easy, to an attentive and upright Christian, as to discover which is the true church of Christ: because, on the one hand, all Christians agree in their common creeds concerning the characters or marks which she bears; and because, on the other hand, these marks are of an *exterior and splendid kind*, such

as require no *extensive learning or abilities*, and little more than the use of our *senses and common reason*, to discern them."* Enter, then, our venerable church, for out of it there is no salvation. You, having the opportunity thus offered, will be inevitably damned forever if you refuse.

I am somewhat staggered at the self-possession of this complacent speaker. Nevertheless, I choose to risk a few days longer the possibility of being cut off under this terrible anathema. But what have we next? Another claimant, though far more modest in his pretensions, to the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He also exhibits his genealogy and exterior marks. But I find that he relies far more for success, in proving the other most hypocritical, corrupt, and wicked, than upon any independent merits of his own church. I perceive, too, that there is a deadly rivalry between them; yet nevertheless, a remarkable agreement throughout both. They are alike outward and showy structures—magnificent to the view, and elaborately fur-

* End of Controversy, Letter L., p. 323.

nished with all the appliances to seduce and captivate the natural affections of men. Eloquence attracts the intellect, music the feelings, and architecture, with the fine arts in her train, ministers to the eye in the matchless profusion of mediæval monuments of genius. Yet I am unable to choose between them; for if I take the "exterior marks," I fear the principle will conduct me to the first, however repugnant may be this complete surrender of my freedom to think for myself, into the hands of a man as like in all particulars as may be, and no doubt as frail. In either case, if I may judge by the mass of testimony exhibited against each other, the marks of *sanctity* are by no means apparent.

They both refer me to the Holy Scriptures in proof of their respective credentials. The first, in a qualified manner, as subordinate to the interpretation he and his colleagues may pronounce; the tradition which, he tells me, has been handed down from their predecessors, however this may conflict with the text. The other informs me that they contain the whole counsel of God—the only revelation he ever

made to man—and are the highest rule of faith and practice. With this reference, I examine for myself; and readily discover that if obedience to the positive injunctions of him to whom every portion points as the perfect standard, is to constitute the criterion of their claim to represent him, there is scarcely a mark of identity. His advent was ushered in with the anthem of “Peace on earth, and good will to men.” He declared his kingdom not of this world. He testified continually against forms, and rituals, and ceremonies, and inveighed most severely against the hypocritical claimants to an outward hierarchy, and a spiritual control over men. “How can ye,” said he to these, “escape the damnation of hell?”* and told them “Had ye believed Moses” (that is, the *outward* record), “ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.”† He ever preached perfect righteousness, both by precept and example, without any compromise with opinion or expediency; and having left no “mark” whatever which the ingenuity

* Matt. xxiii. 33.

† John v. 46.

of men could torture into a warrant for spiritual dominion over their fellows, he promised to be with his disciples to the end of the world—to send them his Holy Spirit, which would lead and guide them into all truth.

How, then, am I to treat the claims of those who, at the present-day, attempt to impose on me their commandments as the doctrines of Christ? Who assure me that he is not with the two or three gathered together in his name? That he does not dwell in spirit with those who look for him, as their leader and their guide? That such ideas are mere chimeras of a heated brain? That his express commands cannot be meant as rules of conduct? That doctrines and creeds, which have not a shadow of foundation in what he said or did, are the great essentials of my everlasting salvation?

To reconcile the monstrous perversions which these men have systematized, and defend as Christian Theology, with the ascription of honesty and uprightness to them, would be impossible, did I not remember that they were educated in them—that they live by them—that

a doubt or a suggestion as to their truth, would be at the peril of their worldly standing and their pecuniary incomes.

It is, alas ! but too true, and too sad a proof of the utter depravity of men, that the teachers of religion are placed, by education and position, precisely on a par with the merchant, the physician, and the advocate at law. They select the profession as a means of support, and are apprenticed to learn it. It is not pretended that they seek the truth. Whatever may be the aspirations or the abilities of a candidate for what is called holy orders, the bed of Procrustes, on which he is laid, lops him or stretches him to the one standard of his sect. Sent forth from his theological college by human ordination, to teach a particular community the stereotyped opinions which they alone will hear, the path of ambition is opened before him, as the blind, and deaf, and partly dumb mercenary of his employers. The instant he sees, the moment he hears, the day that he speaks, as a free and honest man, with other eyes, or ears, or tongue, that path is closed. The fruits of his studies

are lost — his subsistence may utterly fail — for his trade is spoiled.

I am desirous to avoid, if possible, the use of language that may wound the feelings of any; but I cannot stifle, on a subject of such paramount importance to all men, the expression of plain, but necessary truths. For of the evils which afflict society, none, in my opinion, is comparable to that under consideration, for the certainty, and the magnitude, and the permanence of its results. To this organization of intellect into a class or order of men, as a separate profession by which to live and rise in the world, must mainly be attributed the practically anti-christian state of communities and nations. They stand a direct and formidable barrier in the way of the sincere seeker after truth. But for their rivalry and contention, I should have little hope, even in this land, for freedom of conscience. A general union of the clergy upon any great measure, though that of national education, would, I fear, be ominous for our liberty, virtue, and independence. Nevertheless, I have no controversy with them as men and neighbors.

In my personal acquaintance, I can take no ground for distinguishing them, in any particular, from the mass of my fellow-citizens. They are educated in error, and become the active instruments of a false system, to spread and perpetuate it. They profess honesty of purpose—I may not gainsay it, for I cannot search the heart. That Being to whom they are individually accountable, whose mercy covers his judgment-seat to an hair's breadth, has reserved to himself this awful prerogative. But I must say, in view of the clear precepts and the promises of the Master, which they theoretically recognize, but practically ignore, "How can ye escape condemnation?"

They will object, perhaps, to the command "Freely ye have received, freely give," that they have not received freely. This is most true. They have paid for their theological education, and must sell their theological services. They consider the laborer worthy of his hire—this also is reasonable. As they are employed and paid to preach and pray, sprinkle and communicate, marry and bury, and generally perform

ecclesiastical services within certain geographical limits, it is proper that the contract be fulfilled on both sides. But let them not assume to be pastors over the sheep of Christ—for these know his voice, and the voice of a stranger they will not follow.* Let them, as the hireling, and not the shepherd, keep within their jurisdiction, and smooth the path of the worldling as well as they may. Let them profess, truly, to be “blind leaders of the blind,”† and they will not be disturbed. When, however, they claim to lord it over God’s heritage, with such challenges as are put forth in the works I have before me, I feel more than a warrant to expose their pretensions, and hold them up as the veriest counterfeits, in every particular, that the world has ever beheld.

That the leaders of the people cause them to err—that the priests bear rule by their means, because the people love to have it so—is the reason why Christendom has made little or no progress in learning the very rudiments of the

* John x. 5.

† Matt. xv. 14.

gospel of Christ. In nothing is man more inconsistent, than in seeking counsel of a class whose education and interest both prompt them to turn him from the great teacher, the "more sure word of prophecy;" by taking heed to which as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, the day will dawn, and the day star, Christ, the sun of the spiritual firmament, arise in his heart. Human wisdom excludes the testimony of an interested witness, upon the smallest question of property; but blindly surrenders the salvation of the immortal soul to an order of men who have every motive that worldly interest can create, to bind around it the chains of spiritual darkness, and lull its apprehensions into a fatal repose. How prolific such a course, of corresponding ignorance, wickedness, and misery, let the present and past condition of the race answer.

Is it necessary to add to what has already been said on the subject, that Jesus Christ, the *anointed Saviour*, always commissions *his* ministers with the *burden* of the word of the Lord? That he is still with them wherever they are

sent, "confirming that word with signs following?"* That it does not return unto him void, but it accomplishes that which he pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto he sends it?† The condition of such a minister, to be blind and deaf as to all outward knowledge, in the discharge of his duty, is ever the same—"Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not: opening the ears, but he heareth not."‡ His minister ever tarries at Jerusalem, the soul's quiet habitation, until endued with power from on high, and in this power declares the whole counsel of God, irrespective of the fear or the favor of men. As no other preparation than that of the heart is required, his or her hands (for all are one in Christ) are employed about the lawful pursuits of life, to provide for its necessary sustenance and comfort; and when from home on

* Mark xvi. 20.

† Isaiah lv. 11.

‡ Ibid, xlii. 19, 20.

the service of the Master, such entertainment as those who are worthy may offer in the feeling of hospitality, suffices. He can covet no man's silver or gold, if he would keep his eye single to the business about which he is sent. Such are the pastors whom Christ commissions to feed his sheep and lambs. They neither can, nor dare they, of themselves, do anything. They have no nearer access to the Father of mercies than any of their fellows; but having become converted, regenerate—having tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come—in humility and as submissive instruments only—they are qualified to speak to others of that which was from the beginning, which they have heard, which they have seen with their eyes, which they have looked upon, and their hands have handled, of the Word of Life.* It matters not as to the fashion of their speech—Christ, their Master, is with them, in the midst of his gathered church; and as face

* 1 John i. 1.

answereth face in a glass, so the word spoken will meet the witness in the hearts of the hearers; or, what is far better, in that awful reverent waiting frame of mind, the Saviour himself will break the spiritual bread, and baptize the soul into a sense and feeling of his own ineffable glory.

CHAPTER IX.

ABROGATION OF THE LAW.

THE continual tendency of the mind of man towards a state of worldliness and sensuality, has been, in the foregoing pages, illustrated from the scriptural writers of his history. Fallen, by transgressing the divine law, from that original condition of purity in which he was created, and dead to the controlling Power that kept his lower nature in absolute subjection, we have traced the depth of his wretchedness, and the means appointed for his redemption from sin. The institution has been set forth, of that series of outward types which represent his progress under tutors and governors, from his state of nature to a state of grace—from that of an alien and almost an enemy, to his adoption as a son of God—from the small glimmering of spiritual light, in which the Law of outward command-

ments is given, to lead him from the bondage of this world, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We behold him throughout, rebellious, stiff-necked, and ever prone to choose darkness rather than light—to rest in delusions and carnal ease, rather than take up the cross of Christ, and follow him in the regeneration.

It would be a contrast, indeed, if the advent of the only begotten Son of God, the end and crown of the series, by whom life and immortality were brought to light, had changed his invariable tendency to evil. But it did not. With even more stupendous miracles than heralded the mission of Moses, as an appeal to their senses—with infinitely greater authority, in the irresistible conviction that accompanied his teaching—with the declaration from their own Scriptures, their idolized rule of faith, that he was the expected Messiah, he was rejected and put to death. Not only did he fail to receive the welcome from his own, to whom he was especially sent, but he was deserted, in the hour of extremity, by the few disciples who had received, and forsaken all to follow him. “I

will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," was fully verified in his case; he "trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him."

In the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, it was expedient that he should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* He accordingly suffered, the innocent for the guilty, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God."† There is no higher evidence furnished to man of God's goodness and love, than this. There is no more perfect demonstration of the oneness of God in will and benevolence with his church, than this proof. I have stated before, that he follows the rebellious prodigal as the fondest parent does his erring child, to bring him back, if possible, to virtue and peace. He sends his messengers — his regenerate and purified children — to speak the word of reproof, of persuasion, or of encouragement; and after that, to suffer with them or for them. If recovered, "there is more joy in heaven over one

* John xi. 50, 51.

† 1 Pet. iii. 18.

sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”* Of such value is the salvation of a single soul in the sight of God and his redeemed. It was now, however, his only begotten Son who was sent—one who never sinned—to speak, as never man spake, the words of perfect wisdom and goodness. He declared to Pilate, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.”† And stated, in his sublime prayer—“I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”‡ This was in allusion to his ministry. The remainder, which might not properly be called *work*, being but passive suffering, his last exclamation proclaimed *finished* with his mortal life.§

It is a commonly received opinion that the death of Jesus Christ formed a part, and the most prominent part, of God’s plan for man’s redemption from sin. I must confess that I

* Luke xv. 7.

† Ibid, xvii. 4.

‡ John xviii. 37.

§ Ibid, xix. 30.

have not been able to arrive at such a conclusion. In giving my reasons, I hope to treat the subject in that reverent manner which will not, or should not, offend the feelings of any ; and, be it remembered, I go to the very highest outward authority in search of truth. If his testimony is not clear, I illustrate it only by what can be fairly drawn from the records sanctioned and confirmed by him. In view of the positive declarations above referred to, perfectly harmonizing with all he said and did as to the character and extent of his mission, we overstrain legitimate deductions by framing schemes and systems that hinge on what he left unsaid. He, surely, was the best exponent of his own doctrine ; and unless some evidence can be furnished nearer the fountain-head, for the all-important part attributed to the tragedy upon Mount Calvary, I must class it among the mere inventions of human wisdom and priestly craft.

It is true that this event was foreshadowed by prophecy — that he himself conversed about his death, and explained its necessity as it actually occurred — that Moses and Elias, who appeared

in glory, “spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem” — yet, nevertheless, among the many unauthorized doctrines based upon his sayings and doings, I consider this as having the least foundation.

The object to be attained, in the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, is the restoration of man to that condition whence he fell, viz. : the state in which, his will being slain, he becomes obedient to the righteous government of God in his soul. God, himself, is unchangeable—the same to-day, yesterday, and forever. He is represented as changeable, because he follows a rebellious creature throughout the subtleties of his serpentine reasonings, and the sinuosities of his devious course. His dispensations and his plans are changing, simply because they are adapted to the constant and final end in view. They are now by judgments upon individuals or nations — again by warnings immediately and instrumentally — at other periods, by the alternative of woes or repentance — sometimes, by the pathetic remonstrances of his militant church, and its baptism into suffering and death for the

sake of the dying, and even the spiritually dead—and not seldom, by the awful sentence of destruction.

In consequence of this, no prophecy, having reference to the will of man for its accomplishment, can be positive. It must always be conditional—for, were it made otherwise, man's free agency would be destroyed. I may cite, almost indefinitely, passages of Scripture for proof of this. One of the most remarkable instances is made the theme of the book of Jonah. This prophet, we are told, was commanded to go to Nineveh, and cry against it for its wickedness. He tried to escape from the duty, but was compelled, by suffering, to submit. He was bidden a second time, and accordingly went. Through him, the prophecy of God was positive—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The object was accomplished—they repented, from the greatest to the least, in sackcloth and ashes. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way: and God repented of the evil that he had

said that he would do unto them : and he did it not." *

When he sent his only begotten Son to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it was for the same end. But a greater than Jonah failed to accomplish the object of his ministry—"He came unto his own, and his own received him not." † Had they received him—had they repented, as the Ninevites did at the preaching of Jonah—can we suppose they would have put him to death? And if they had not taken his life, what becomes of the fore-ordination, and the contract between the "first and second persons of the Trinity," as alleged to have been made in reference to the sacrifice of Christ?

But it is supposed, from the reasoning of Paul in several of his Epistles, especially that to the Hebrews, of which he is generally reputed the author, that the death of Christ by violence was necessary, in order to end the Law. It is true that the apostle, particularly in addressing those most familiar with it, draws his analogies from the

* Jonah iii. 10.

† John i. 11.

sacrifices under that Law, to show its termination in the one offering, by which "he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."* It was the advent and preaching of Christ, however, that annulled the Law of Moses, and that brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. He, himself, was under the Law, and submitted to its rituals; but, in his sermon on the mount, he abolished the commandments of the Law given because of the hardness of their hearts, and preached the gospel as it has been preached neither before nor since. Its pure and perfect doctrines were promulgated, and a standard of holiness raised before men, far beyond what they then or since have been able to receive.

His preaching and his display of miraculous power, in fact, but hardened them the more. His testimony convicted, but did not, because it could not, convert them. Their state rendered that impossible. I say this, in the full belief that all things are possible with God; but when

* Heb. x. 14.

he made man a free agent, he gave something to a being formed in his own likeness, and in the gift the power to will freely was forever bestowed. Had it been possible to reach their hardened hearts, surely he wherein dwelt the fullness of the Godhead, would not have wept over Jerusalem because her day of visitation had passed by.

The inshining of God's light upon the soul, has been likened to the action of the sun on matter, which produces different effects according to the recipient; thus, it softens wax, but hardens clay. The comparison, in this respect, is perfectly applicable. He said to Moses, when commissioned to show those wonders before Pharaoh which he put into his hand — "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."* And the result proved it with every successive miracle, until the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt accomplished his object. Paul's reasoning, when commenting on this in his epistle to the Romans, is hard to be under-

* Exod. iv. 21.

stood, and has been wrested to establish the absurd doctrine of predestination—a doctrine which can never be reconciled with the position of man, or the attributes of God. I do not perceive, however, that his mode of illustrating this subject, defective and ambiguous as it appears, has an application, in any way, to the dealings of God with the soul of man. The case he instances just before introducing this—“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,”* manifestly proves that the power of the potter over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor, has reference to the individuals as types under the Law. For the ways of God are equal—his grace has ever been dispensed to all,† and not a part of the human family. It must have been, therefore, to Esau, as well as Jacob. But as types, representing, the elder, his natural birth in sin, and the younger, man’s spiritual birth in the regeneration, Esau was, figuratively, hated, and Jacob loved.

* Romans ix. 13.

† Titus ii. 11.

That Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind, is abundantly evident from many Scripture passages. I have shown the import of the term* as applied to the state of those not actual offenders. Matthew explains it in like manner, when recounting that Jesus cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,"† or sins. Truly, "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."‡ But the sins and the atonements under the Law, were of an outward nature; and, saith the apostle, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins,"§ that is, against God. In what follows this last quotation, we have the assurance that sacrifices and offerings for sin, by the Law, were not pleasing to God — that Christ came to do his will, and

* *Ante*, p. 32.

† 1 Pet. ii. 24.

† Matt. viii. 17.

§ Heb. x. 4.

took away the first, that he might establish the second covenant. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all."* It is, therefore, in doing the will of God that we are sanctified or made holy, through the one offering which ended all others, and was their substitute. We "received the atonement," or, in other words, were reconciled by it; and "being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."† But surely the reconciliation is in consequence of a change on the part of rebellious man.

The surrender of his life, therefore, to the Jews, in obedience to the will of God, which by their rejection was made necessary in order to maintain his testimony, must be considered, first—the one outward offering that ended all others forever; and secondly—in a far more important point of view, as the purchase of his church.‡ He was alone on the cross, despised and rejected of men, and, from his own testimony, forsaken of God. Truly it might be

* Heb. x. 10.

† Rom. v. 10, 11.

‡ Acts xx. 28.

said, "he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."* It was an offering abundantly sanctified to man, for it formed the seed of the church; and acceptable to God, being in accordance with his will, and the manifestation of his infinite love.

The texts wherein he is represented as a propitiation, must, I conceive, be greatly wrested, to apply them as the Roman Catholic writers, and all claiming under their authority, have done. John says, in his first general epistle—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."† And Paul also, in writing to the Romans—"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the

* 1 Pet. iii. 18.

† 1 John ii. 1, 2.

law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."*

The substance of the above is, that Jesus Christ, our advocate with the Father, the propitiation for our sins, is, through faith in his blood, set forth to declare his righteousness for the remission of past sins. All the terms are applied spiritually. The apostles are illustrating the great fact that redemption from original sin, the bondage of the natural condition, is purchased or acquired when the soul reaches the state of regeneration — when old things under

* Rom. iii. 20-26.

the law of outward commandments are done away—when the vail (that conceals the inward and true teacher) beneath which it has been in darkness, subject to forms, ceremonies, opinions, and speculations, is rent, and all things made new in the heavenly man Christ Jesus—but through faith in his blood—words which I shall dwell upon hereafter.

The culmination and close of that series of types, given by the Almighty under the Jewish Theocracy (in which term I include God's government, through various forms, until the abolition of the Law), was in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He it was of whom the Lord spake by Moses — "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."* He was the outward manifestation of God in the fulness—the perfect outward rule and exemplar of men. It is important that we should keep this fact constantly in view, for religious theories and institutions are very

* Deut. xviii. 18, Acts iii. 22.

far from a practical recognition of it. But, as there is a dispensation higher than the outward Law written on tables of stone, to which it pointed and led, so there is a guide greater than Jesus Christ of Nazareth, of which he was but the type or outward representative. His second appearance in the soul as the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to lead and guide into all truth, and ever present as its Saviour, is the blessed reality of God's whole plan for man's redemption. And, abundantly as this second appearance was manifested immediately after his crucifixion, it has been no less within the reach of mankind in every age of the world. But it does not follow that because he terminated the outward dispensation to a particular people, and visibly, as it were, introduced that of the Gospel, the higher and the perfect covenant, we are to seek for rules, precedents, and authority, from his instruments. On the contrary, by the whole series of types, man was taught to look directly to the source of all knowledge and power — to leave his dependence on his fellow for aid and direction, and come to that infallible Teacher,

the Word which, in the beginning, was his life and light. The Apostle Paul, on his conversion — or introduction into the gospel dispensation, or regeneration, or baptism with fire and the Holy Ghost, or revelation of the Son in him, for they are all convertible terms — went not to the apostles at Jerusalem to learn his duty to God.* And he told the Corinthians, Christ “died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”† This must be the experience of every one who reaches that state of the soul in which, by adoption, he can truly call God, Father.

* Gal. i. 17.

* 2 Cor. v. 15–17.

CHAPTER X.

RELICS OF THE LAW.

I SHALL proceed with what is called the canon of the Scriptures, to show the state of the Church on the termination of that outward government ordained of the Most High. The apostles were called and commissioned to preach, while Jesus was yet with them. They were witnesses of his miracles, and taught by him personally, in a manner which, were it possible to learn after the mode contended for by the Roman Catholic hypothesis, might be supposed adequate to their perfect instruction as gospel ministers. Yet, although they returned with the testimony that the very devils were subject to them through his name,* they were but imperfectly qualified for the work; for he

* Luke x. 17.

told them, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."* They looked to him, and depended on him, while he was yet with them; and hence it was expedient for them that he should go away. If, therefore, the apostles, chosen and educated by the highest outward authority ever yet furnished for instruction in righteousness, could not be made *living ministers* of the word, without power immediately from on high, where stands the claim for teaching and ordination, by men confessedly weak, and erring, and oftentimes wicked?

We have evidence enough from the four evangelists, that they were yet but as children in the knowledge of spiritual truths. Educated under the rituals and ceremonies of the Law, they partook largely of the general belief that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be set up on earth, with temporal authority. Even after the Holy Ghost had descended upon them, they divested themselves of Jewish superstitions and

* John xvi. 7.

prejudices but slowly and partially. Before the day of Pentecost, they selected a successor to Judas by lot; and after that wonderful outpouring of the spirit, the customs and tenets of the synagogue clung to their ministry, and clouded their doctrines. Is it, therefore, wonderful that they could not bear the many things Christ had to say unto them* while in the flesh, seeing they made such tardy progress in learning, even when the instruments of greater works than he himself did?†

Were the theory of an outward visible church, instituted by Christ, correct, we should expect to find perfection in example, and infallibility in doctrine, near the fountain whence it sprang. But no such dogma is to be met with among the primitive Christians. Their earliest records are contained in the New Testament, and this affords not the slightest warrant for its assumption. If the practices of the apostles are to be received as divine institutions, because they *were* practised by them, then the rule must sanction

* John xvi. 12.

† Ibid, xiv. 12.

and enforce the adoption of all. In such case, customs of Jewish, and even of heathen origin, will be re-engrafted upon modern Christianity. Paul shaved his head at Cenchrea because of a vow,* and circumcised a Greek,† albeit the latter rite had been pronounced unnecessary by the apostles and elders. The Roman Catholic disputant gets over the difficulty by that convenient aid, the traditions of the church, for which he assuredly has some warrant in the instructions given to Timothy.‡ But how the Episcopal writer, who pronounces the canon of Scripture the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice, can extract what is infallible and obligatory, from that of the same origin which is not, constitutes a problem not so easily solved.

I aver, then, that the general tendency of mankind to leave the spirit for the letter — the inward for the outward — the substance for the shadow — found no exception in the case of the apostles, on the promulgation of Christianity; although it is freely acknowledged that they

* Acts xviii. 18.

† Ibid, xvi. 3.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

themselves came to see the character of those rites and ceremonies, then continued in condescension to the weakness of their Jewish converts. Happily for the great doctrine which Jesus Christ preached to them, and the revelation of the Holy Ghost abundantly confirmed with overwhelming conviction, their testimony on the subject is clear and conclusive. Their epistles, generally, are addressed to the particular states and conditions of the churches, or congregations of the believers established in different places. The modes of reasoning, and the illustrations used, are adapted to the end separately in view. Thus, in writing to the Gentile converts at Rome, Paul shows that they too had a law to themselves, equivalent to the written law of the Jews, and that obedience to what they knew placed them, before God, upon equal ground with the circumcision. While, in the epistle to the Hebrews, who had the outward law of Moses, the analogies are nearly all drawn from the types with which they were familiar under that law. He addresses the faithful brethren at Colosse a letter of encouragement,

while the backsliding Galatians receive a sharp reproof for their reception of another gospel than the grace of Christ, by which they had been turned again to the beggarly elements. Having begun in the Spirit, they had sought to be made perfect by the flesh. His letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, are more special and private, but abounding with reiterations of his great doctrine, amid the advice, direction, and entreaty called for by the occasion and the circumstances.

It is, I think, no difficult task to satisfy an impartial inquirer, from these epistles, and the other books of the New Testament, that the outward church, as a segregate body of individuals, recognizable like corporations, societies, and governments of men, never had an existence. It has been shown, from the highest authority, what constitutes the visible church of Christ. Let the "marks of the Lord Jesus" be manifested by his patience, meekness, humility, purity, and power from on high, and all whose eyes are sufficiently anointed with the eye-salve of the kingdom to discern spiritual things, will

salute it in gospel fellowship. But from the very beginning, this church has been rarely met with out of the wilderness — like its holy head, it has ever been despised and rejected of men — like him, it is not of this world. If it were, the world would love its own. Who will dare to point out that collection of men whose thoughts and actions are altogether from God, and not of themselves? Until this be done, I apprehend that the very foundation is wanting for the claim of a specific body of men, as such, to holiness and infallibility of doctrine. Hence, the church is *manifested* by its power. As the salt of the earth, which has not lost its savor. As the light of the world, through which Christ the Sun of righteousness shines visibly, to illuminate and to vivify what is sunk in darkness, and lost in death.

But the marks of the outward churches, claiming by succession from the apostles, or by imitation of their practices and forms, are of a very different character. These are sufficiently visible and cognizant to men. To become a member of such is purely a matter of will, pro-

vided there be no great disqualification by notoriously bad conduct. Such a church may be composed, in part or in whole, of unregenerate men, who, by Christ's express declaration, cannot see, much less enter, the kingdom of God.* To call such the one holy church, is to bring righteousness into fellowship with unrighteousness—light into communion with darkness—Christ into concord with Belial.† But I have no intention to cast a stigma upon any denomination of professing Christians; I merely wish to apply their principles, and exhibit these in their ultimate development. I believe there are members of the true mystical church to be gathered out of all; but so far from conceding their claim to be, corporately or collectively, even a part of the Christian church, I consider them the true congeners of the synagogue—identical in institution, and cognate in government.

It is not necessary to trace the declension of what is in history commonly called the church,

* John iii. 3-5.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

nor to exhibit the partial reformation it has undergone from time to time. Such a course would be foreign to my purpose. I am endeavoring to give a reason of the hope that is in me, as a reply to the assumptions made by the writers whose works are under consideration. They respectively claim to set forth the Church of Christ. If I cannot show that neither of them has any foundation on which to stand as such, I must, by my principles, determine between the two, and secure, as far as I may, my soul's salvation in her arms. But I have already exhibited the character and the marks which the spouse of Christ ever bears, from his own testimony, confirmed by that of his immediate apostles. I deem it of no consequence to descend farther in the history than this, for if I can, as I think I shall, show that all the rites and ceremonies and observances now in use, are continuations of the outward law abrogated by Christ, and discouraged, though allowed by his apostles, I shall need but little more to carry out my design.

We proceed, therefore, to the examination of what are called by Dr. Milner the means of sanctity. The principal and most efficacious of these, according to the Roman Catholic hypothesis, are the seven sacraments, as they are termed, of Baptism, Confirmation, The Lord's Supper, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony. It would be a useless waste of labor to follow up all the inventions which Popes and Councils, Doctors and Priests, Convocations and Synods, have from time to time engrafted on the various forms of religious profession. Their name is Legion, and their parentage no higher than those above enumerated. Nor do I purpose to go farther into these than may seem absolutely necessary to show, beyond all doubt, their character as excrescences borrowed from Jewish, and in some instances, heathen superstitions. In the outward code dispensed by the Most High, were, through the evil tendencies of the human heart, incorporated a vast number of glosses and traditions, by which, as our Saviour testified, it was made

of none effect. It would be, indeed, a remarkable circumstance, if the growth of centuries which resulted in so corrupt a hierarchy as that of Rome, should not have produced a like mass, of heterogeneous mixture, to ensnare the credulity and enslave the ignorance of mankind.

CHAPTER XI.

RELICS OF THE LAW — (CONTINUED).

OF BAPTISM.

THE term Baptism is, in the records of the New Testament, so continually used by Christ and his apostles, that if any word should have a settled meaning, we might suppose it to be this. On the contrary, I maintain that none of equal frequency has been less understood in its original import. When he used it in the quotation before introduced,* “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” it was prefaced by his information, as a thing necessary to be known in connection with the command—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” and followed by the

* *Ante*, p. 112.

assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." *

Surely any unprejudiced person, in reading a passage like this, would couple both the power in the antecedent, and the promise in the subsequent verse, with the duty to be performed. If, then, Christ, having all power in heaven and in earth, and promising to be ever present with that power, commanded as his last solemn injunction to teach all nations, *baptizing* them, must he not attach an awful significance to a word introduced in such a connection, and under such circumstances?

If we pass on to the next Evangelist, its use is no less portentous—"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." † Here, belief and baptism are to be followed by salvation; and from the very absence of the latter in the remainder of the sentence, we must infer a close and neces-

* Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

† Mark xvi. 15, 16.

sary connection between them, as also is evident from what Paul told the Ephesians, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism."* Yet, the received doctrine of both the churches defended in the works under consideration, is, that Christ enjoined them to sprinkle a few drops of water in the face while pronouncing certain words.

But the absurdity of their practical interpretation does not stop here. The command to teach all nations, baptizing them, is fulfilled by sprinkling infants who cannot be taught. Thus, that which should accompany and effectuate the teaching, is made, by their inconsistent theory, the principal, and in the case of those who never reach an age to receive teaching, the only means of sanctity. Can there be an instance furnished of a more flagrant perversion of language to mean what it does not, than this Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal doctrine of baptism?

I shall endeavor to show, in a concise manner, the introduction and the mixed import of the

* Eph. iv. 5.

word, as used throughout the New Testament. It is scarcely necessary to remind the well-informed reader, that baptism (*i. e.*, dipping or immersing) with water, was and is a practice universal in the warm climates of Asia, both as a means of purifying, to cleanse the body, and a religious rite, to signify the ablution required for the soul. Hence, it was appropriately incorporated among the emblems of sanctification, under that series of types and shadows of the good things to come. Throughout the commandments of Moses, washing the body forms a conspicuous medium of purification, to cleanse from the sins of accident or commission therein set forth. We find also a most lively representation of the baptism which the soul must undergo, in the direction of the prophet Elisha to Naaman the leper—"Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."* The river Jordan, which had to be passed by Israel as the last obstacle to their entering the promised land,

* 2 Kings v. 10.

was that in which John, the fore-runner of Christ, baptized his disciples with water unto repentance. Could there be more expressive language used to convey an idea, than that of immersion in what was figuratively the river of judgment, to show the necessity of washing by repentance? That John, in person and ministry, was a type under the Jewish dispensation, is generally conceded; indeed, none professing a belief in any system of religion having reference for its origin to the gospel narratives, can, with the least color of foundation, deny the fact. His testimony was—"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."* Now let us ascertain from him thus heralded—the Prophet to be heard in all things, according to Moses—what was the position of John. "Among those," said he, "that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but

* Matt. iii. 11.

he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* Can this language be applicable to John, as a man, whose whole life was one of self-denial, and whose death that of a martyr for his righteous testimony? Surely not. Our Saviour referred to him as one of the types, and the last before himself—that baptizer of the soul unto repentance, whose washing should precede the baptism of the Son of God with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whereby all the first or chaffy nature being consumed, it is quickened and made a new creature in the kingdom of God. Hence the least in the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation, is greater than the greatest under the law.

The baptism of John was with water—that of Christ with the Holy Ghost and fire, as stated in the foregoing text. The first was an outward act, and a mere type; the second was a figurative expression of what Christ, by his inward and spiritual appearance, should effect on the soul. The baptism with fire never occurred

* Luke vii. 28.

outwardly, and necessarily could not. Nor, by the testimony of the evangelist, did that of the Holy Ghost until Jesus had ascended and was glorified.*

When he asked the Pharisees, “whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men,” he recognized the distinction between that and his own. His disciples baptized with John’s baptism, but he himself did not.† He was baptized by John in order to fulfil the righteousness of the law,‡ under which he lived, for he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.§ The testimony of John concerning the two baptisms is very clear. “He must increase, but I must decrease.”|| This can alone be predicable of the two as representing, the one, an outward material figure destined to pass away with the end of the law, the other that birth of the Spirit, whereby man enters the kingdom of God—that child born, that son given, on whose shoulder shall forever

* John vii. 39.

‡ Ibid. v. 17.

† Ibid. iv. 2.

|| John iii. 30.

‡ Matt. iii. 15.

rest the government, whose name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace — of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.* In the spiritual antitype the baptism of repentance must also pass away on the introduction of the second covenant, the gospel dispensation, wherein all things are new, and all forever of God.

Dr. Milner says, “no authority can be more express than that of the Scripture, as to this necessity — (i. e. outward baptism.) Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, says Christ, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John iii. 5. Repent, cries St. Peter, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins. Acts ii. 38. Arise, answered Ananias to St. Paul, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins. Acts xxii. 16.” † He forgot to add, however, the testimony of the apostles on the subject, in explana-

* Isaiah ix. 6.

* End of Religious Controversy, Letter XX., p. 120.

tion of their views. "And as I began to speak," says Peter to the apostles and brethren, who condemned him for eating with the uncircumcised, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."* Here is a plain exposition, from one he calls the supreme pastor of his church, of the foundation text on which he builds it. "Go ye forth and teach, baptizing, &c. Peter did teach, and, as he taught, the word was confirmed "with signs following"—the hearers were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Again, he informs us, still more explicitly, what saving baptism is not, and what it is. "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."†

Paul told the Corinthians, in speaking of

* Acts xi. 15, 16.

† 1 Pet. iii. 21.

those whom he had baptized, viz: Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."* Here, outward baptism is spoken of. If, then, this great apostle was not sent to baptize with the outward baptism, which is the baptism of John with water, how can Christ's command, to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be construed to mean that baptism for which Paul had no commission?

The same apostle declares, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism."† None will deny that, as he was not a whit "behind the very chiefest apostles," his ministry must have been instrumental in the saving of souls. If his teaching was so, could it have been otherwise than by baptizing according to the command of Christ? But he declares that he was not sent to baptize (outwardly) — and that there is one baptism — which, I take it, means *but one saving* baptism. Is not the inference clear then,

* 1 Cor. 1. 17.

† Eph. iv. 5.

that this one saving baptism, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was that commanded by Christ—in which whoso believeth (i. e. practically, by its regenerating effect upon the heart)—shall be saved?*

He gives, again, the like definition, in writing to bring back the Galatians from their retrograde movement towards the beggarly elements of the Law. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”† And he says to them, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”‡

Now, these phrases,—baptism into Christ—putting on Christ—Christ being formed in them—are manifestly convertible terms—meaning one and the same thing. If Paul, therefore, travailed, or laboured, by teaching, which his epistle proves, to baptize them into Christ, he *was* sent. The *one* baptism, therefore, is not the outward baptism for which he declares he was *not* sent, but the baptism into Christ—into

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Gal. iii. 27.

‡ Ibid. iv. 19.

the name (which I have shown above to mean the power) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

That the apostles baptized with water, both while Christ remained outwardly with them, and after the Holy Ghost was given, constitutes no argument in its favor, when, as I have shown, their testimony was eventually raised against it. They circumcised, and did other things which, by universal consent, are considered abolished. It is not from the remnants of Judaism still prevalent among them after their conversion, that we are to draw our warrant for practices, of a character antagonist to the pure doctrines of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Still less shall we stand excused for descending lower on the page of ecclesiastical history, to bolster up rites and ceremonies which find no authority at its fountain-head. As I have said, the same rule which would establish, as immutable, any one practice because of their apparent sanction, would operate to bind us in respect to all. And if the interpretation of what are called the Fathers or Pastors

in council, is to be made our infallible guide, we shall need better interpreters of their meaning than either of the controvertists or their fellows in the so called science of Theology, have yet been able to furnish. I could cite authority enough, even from these, to shake the whole system so perseveringly sustained by that wisdom which grasps more at the form than the substance of religion. But such a course would open an illimitable field of controversy, instead of narrowing its boundaries. We all profess that our doctrine shall be tried by the Holy Scriptures. I aver, and I think have proved, not only that the sprinkling of infants has no foundation at all, but that the practice of baptizing adults in water is not warranted, either by Christ or his apostles. Leaving, therefore, this head, which might be greatly enlarged, I proceed to consider other kindred errors of the same parentage.

After what has been demonstrated as the baptism of Christ, the subject of Confirmation, the second means of sanctity, may be dispatched in a few words. The laying on of hands by a

bishop, to perfect the Christian who has been sprinkled in infancy, must be ranked as a purely unauthorized invention of men. The Roman Catholic doctrine, according to Dr. Milner, is that the Holy Spirit is "communicated in this sacrament," and "those who are true Christians, by virtue of baptism, are not made perfect Christians except by virtue of the sacrament of confirmation."*

I have shown that the baptism of Christ is of the Holy Ghost, the power from on high, which the apostles were to wait for, and which should accompany their teaching. Because the gift of the Holy Ghost did, in some instances, follow the laying on of hands, this formality has descended with the outward succession of bishops, according to the hypothesis of the Roman Catholic, and its offspring, the Protestant Episcopal Church. With the former it would seem, from the above quotation, to be absolutely necessary to salvation, as a sequel to the sprinkling in infancy. With the latter, I

* End of Religious Controversy, Letter XX., p. 121.

infer it to be a mere imitative rite, taken from the mother church. In either case it is but a form, which, like others under that outward dispensation of the Law, was, at times, used by the instruments of the Most High, when miracles were wrought through his power. That these forms were not immediately relinquished by the apostles, constitutes no precedent for their continuance — especially as the modern is but a copy of the ancient ceremony without any effect at all. But, as whatever virtue may be claimed for it, depends, by the confession of both parties, on the regular episcopal ordination, as continuing by this form a vicarious substitute for Christ on earth, which I have before shown to be a very figment of priestcraft, this means of sanctity may be dismissed without further comment.*

* The Church of England, according to Bishop Hopkins, rejects Confirmation as a sacrament, because sacraments must be ordained *by Christ himself*, and they must be *outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given to us*. End of Controversy controverted, Letter XIX., Vol. I. p. 360.

Does not washing the feet, *ordained by Christ himself* and expressly commanded, answer the requisition? See post, p. 206.

CHAPTER XII.

RELICS OF THE LAW—(CONCLUDED).

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE consideration of this subject becomes very important, not on account of the scripture warrant for what is called the Eucharist, but because of the doctrines which have been laid down concerning it. I have before alluded to the universal practices of idolatrous nations, in offering living victims to their deities as propitiatory sacrifices, to appease their wrath or draw down their favors. The sanction given this tendency of the human mind, both from nature and education, by directing it to the illustration of spiritual truths under the Law, has, no doubt, tended to perpetuate the belief in outward sacrifices, as acceptable offerings to the Most High.

What testimony can be produced from the highest outward authority, has been above set forth to show the part which the crucifixion of Christ had in the appointed means of man's redemption. The doctrine, however, of the controvertists, under examination, is of a very different character. The parent Church of Rome puts it on the footing of such a sacrifice. That man's redemption from the fall is wholly and solely due to the preconcerted immolation of the "second person of the Trinity," as a victim sacrificed to the "first" — on the alleged ground that it requires an infinite person to atone for an infinite sin, and to satisfy infinite justice. That this sacrifice was made on Mount Calvary — and thereby the door of heaven opened to all the holy men who had preceded him, who until then had been kept in a part of hell called limbo.* That the same actual sacrifice of the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is continually made in the Mass, by the instantaneous

* Bishop Hay's Abridgment, p. 26.

change of a wafer into his body and blood. That, to make this sacrifice, altars and a priesthood are necessary. That the priesthood was instituted by our Saviour in his commission of the keys to Peter and his successors in office as fully set forth above—and that in eating this wafer, the communicant fulfils the condition laid down by Christ, “Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”*

Were it not that the whole of this monstrous theory is based on the gross idea of an outward sacrifice being required to propitiate the Most High, we should be at a loss to understand, how it was ever possible for even the darkest mind to extract such an hypothesis from the scriptures of Truth. But, as man has ever been the same in all ages, since his serpentine reason usurped the seat of God, we may legitimately infer that the grovelling superstition, which, likening his gods to himself, led him and does lead him, to flatter them with incense, and appease or bribe

* End of Religious Controversy.

them with outward offerings and victims, has caused him thus to heathenize the gospel of Christ. It might be interesting to trace the progress of error, in its perversion of the simple, but highly figurative teachings of our blessed Lord, gathering strength as it rolled onward, until its grossness reached the climax, and compelled men to arraign it. But, as my object is to expose it in as concise a manner as is consistent with duty, I must refer the curious to other sources.

We are by nature such enemies to Truth, that the first who uphold it, even in its smallest discoveries, are almost always its martyrs. The seeds, however, are sown in tears and blood, to fructify in due time, and produce fruit after their kind. Were it susceptible of being directly implanted in the stony heart of unregenerate man, the goodness of God would have accomplished his object, and made a short work in the earth. He would not have led him through the mazy path of outward similitudes, borrowed from his perverse idolatry, up to the pure and simple source in his own soul. Nor

would he, through his obedient Son, have conveyed it in parables, "because they, seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand."*

But, constituted as man is in his natural birth, he cannot know, nor receive, the things of the spirit of God.† They are to him either a stumbling block, by which he falls still deeper into error, or foolishness, to be contemned and rejected. The preaching of Christ is now, as it was formerly, a hidden mystery to the wise in this world's knowledge, to be received only by that state comparable to a little child, by which Jesus illustrated the capacity to hear it. Hence it is, that the pompous theories, the elaborate rituals, the gorgeous display of outward ceremonies, are far more effective in impressing his mind, than the simple doctrine of regeneration and entire conversion of heart. Christ, in his inward and spiritual appearance, a present teacher and Saviour from sin, is as much rejected and crucified, as he was formerly, when

* Matt. xiii. 13.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

manifested to the outward understanding of men, by the fulfilment of prophecy, and the abundant proofs of his mission.

The grossness of the theory, and the evident perversion of the principles originally promulgated by Jesus Christ and his apostles, as I have said, caused men to call its details in question. When, in the plenitude of power, the Pope and his coadjutors sold out the merits of holy men, which as the keeper of Christ's storehouse on earth, he had accumulated in the pontifical treasury, it became too much, even for the credulity of those educated to believe him the infallible representative of the Majesty on high. A rebellion against his authority, and a reformation in doctrine and practice were the results. But it was only a reformation—the corrupt tree was left, shorn, it is true, of its most pestiferous branches. Political changes, through long and bloody wars, deprived it of the power to poison the moral atmosphere as widely and absolutely as before. Yet, nevertheless, the sap which gave vigor to the parent,

still flowed through the scions detached and transplanted from the same unholy root.

After the political supremacy of the Pope, the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation was one of the principal subjects of attack, in the establishment of the so called Church of England. The expositor of that church, our American controvertist, takes, I apprehend, the most liberal ground in reference to the tenet, which, in the various grades of opinion thereon, is known to his communion. I infer this from the fierce disputes and litigation that have recently developed within the bosom of the established Church of England, the existence of almost every shade of belief on the subject, from his symbolical interpretation of the Eucharist, up to the very gates of Rome itself—the dogma of the real presence in the bread and wine.

It will not be necessary, therefore, to enter upon the question of the *sacrifice* of our Saviour, under the form of a little flour and water made into a wafer, and constituting after the priest's consecration, the offering of the

second person of the Trinity to the first, in order to appease his wrath, and satisfy his justice. This branch may now be left to Protestant writers of almost every description. A protest has been entered, for some centuries, against the idolatry and absurdity of what is termed the sacrifice of the mass. The form, however, is still retained among professing Christians, with various degrees of ascribed virtue, from the tenet of the Tractarian section of the Anglican Church, a distinction with scarce a difference from the doctrine of the Roman Catholic, down to the Unitarian communicant, who partakes of the elements as simple memorials. But, as I am a firm believer that, to attain eternal life, it is absolutely necessary to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, I shall be obliged, as an important part of my undertaking, to show how this must be effected. Before doing so, I will consider that relic of the Law called the Lord's Supper, in the outward participation whereof the High Churchman, the Roman Catholic, and some

others, assert that they fulfil the condition by which the life alluded to may be received.

The twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew gives his account of what Christ did on eating the Jewish passover with his disciples. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Mark's statement is nearly the same. In Luke, the proceeding is given as follows: "And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which

is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*

It is remarkable that John, who was the only witness, besides Matthew, to whose statement we have access, who was one of the principal actors in the scene described, who wrote long after the others, and whose report of the sayings and doings of Christ at that most eventful period, is by far the most minute of any, should have omitted all allusion to this great fundamental institution of the outward church. Did the matter rest here, there would be no difficulty in fully comprehending the mystic import of our Saviour's words, when, for the last time, fulfilling with his disciples, the duty of an Israelite under the legal dispensation. The assurance contained in each account, that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when he should drink it new with

* Luke xxii. 15-20.

them in his Father's kingdom, sufficiently explains their spiritual meaning.

With many, and indeed most of the observances in which they had been educated, the apostles and early converts still retained the Jewish passover. It was, nevertheless, changed in character, and became a custom among the brethren through weakness rather than sanction. But their practice in this, as likewise that of assembling on the first day of the week, formed the warrant for superstitious doctrines concerning both. It was convenient for ecclesiastical dignitaries, in after times, to claim, from their example, the holiness of the Jewish for the so called Christian sabbath, and through this claim to bind burdens on their fellow-men. So, also, on the primitive custom of distributing bread and wine when assembled, in memorial of that last supper, they based the doctrine of an outward sacrifice for sin, in imitation of the Mosaic institutions.

It is true that we have less apostolic testimony on this head, than that of water baptism. And what is accessible, takes the form rather of

negative than positive evidence. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians furnishes what I shall endeavor to prove such, although, to the superficial examiner, it may appear otherwise. Among the many directions and rebukes concerning their omissions and commissions, as reported to him, he endeavors to reform their superstitious notions in regard to eating and drinking. They were, like the Pharisees, too much disposed to cleanse the outside of the cup and platter, to the neglect of the inward part. Hence, he tells them not to be querulous when bidden to a feast, but to eat what is set before them, asking no question for conscience' sake. Nevertheless, when told that "This is offered in sacrifice unto idols," for the sake of a weak brother, not to eat. "Whether therefore," says he, "ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they

may be saved.”* He then, after some directions about very trivial matters, reproves them for gluttony and drunkenness under the pretence of coming together to eat the Lord’s supper, and proceeds thus: “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that

* 1 Cor. x. 31-3.

eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." *

Is it not evident that the apostle, instead of sanctioning the custom, is but reproofing its abuse, and conveying spiritual instruction through its medium? He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, discerns not the Lord's body, of which this outward supper was but a type. As he had told them before, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" † But types and outward shadows were ended with the law. They only pointed to the substance, which is alone efficacious for the soul's redemption. So far, however, from seeking that substance, and leaving the shadow to pass away, man, in his serpentine wisdom, inaugurated as the Christian church, a fabric of superstition, compounded of the worst features of Judaism and Pagan idolatry. I

* 1 Cor. xi. 23-29.

† Ibid. x. 16.

challenge, even amid the fetish worshippers of benighted Africa, the developement of an idea more repugnant to the scriptural conception of God, than that embraced in this doctrine of the wafer sacrifice.

I shall now endeavor to explain what is the body and blood of Christ: that "bread which came down from heaven:" of which "he that eateth shall live forever."*

In conveying to the reader's mind the position of man as he was created, I have represented him a three-fold being. This I consider the best method of illustrating what is demonstrably true, even by the facts of physiological science. His moral nature is a third organization, still more undeveloped as he enters existence, than that of his intellect. It is as perfectly contrasted with the latter and separated from it, as from his physical formation, and as they are from each other. But, after all, the reality, described by the sacred writers, is sufficiently obvious under any view of the subject. The command was given to that in his moral

* John vi. 51-58.

constitution which could perfectly comprehend and obey it. His duty was as plain to him in the unclouded radiance of the sun of righteousness, the Word in the beginning, the fulness of Divine effulgence, as is the outward pathway to his eye, marked and trimmed, and hedged in for safety, under the brightness of a summer's day. What is it that separates the human from the brute creation, more clearly than this moral accountable nature or conscience? Not his intellectual, unbounded as that would appear, in comparison with the scanty reasoning powers of all below him in the scale of existence. For great as is this, its province and its limits are within the material world. It cannot soar beyond — It is wholly unable by searching to find out God. The loftiest and most cultivated intellect has no nearer access to the throne of grace, to the knowledge which constitutes eternal life,* than the meanest understanding. For “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”†

* John xvii. 3.

† 1 Cor. ii. 11.

In the outward man with whom we have intercourse through the medium of our senses, the blood is the representative of life. The most ordinary means of destroying the latter, is to take away the former. Hence, in the popular acceptation, the world over, these are convertible terms. Moses so considered it, as appears by the express declaration in Leviticus — “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”* It was symbolical, therefore, of the life, that “almost all things are, by the law, purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission.” For says the apostle, “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”†

* Lev. xvii. 11-14.

† Heb. ix. 13, 14, 22.

In the dispensation of the law, I have endeavored to show that the whole series, from the beginning to the end, was typical. Nor does the man who was its crown and close, form an exception. The error then is manifest, in supposing that the outward blood is that blood of Christ, which purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. While the apostle is proving to the Hebrews, from their own authorities, that the one great offering ended all others forever, he applies it in the same sense that our Saviour did, when, at the last supper, he told his disciples to drink of the cup—"For this," said he, "is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."* And again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you—Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."† When in giving them, therefore, the outward bread, he said, "Take, eat: this is my body," he was enforcing the same great spiritual

* Matt. xxvi. 28.

† John vi. 53-4.

truth—that it is the living bread which cometh down from heaven—the flesh and blood of Christ, the eternal Word—of which if a man eat, he shall live forever. It must be his nourishment—become his life and Light, to lead and guide him into all truth. He must receive this as his Saviour, and be born again, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* The Jews, like many, perhaps most, since their day, could not hear it—and he then told them plainly, “It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.”†

It seems a mere work of supererogation, to pursue this subject farther. The whole gospel of John is almost a direct commentary, to explain and enforce the doctrine. Even the important rite minutely detailed where we should assuredly have found an account of the Lord's Supper, had it been intended as an ordinance, that of washing his disciples' feet, both illus-

* John i. 13.

† Ibid. vi. 63.

trates and confirms the same spiritual truth. "If I wash thee not," said he to Peter, "thou hast no part with me." If Peter had no part with his Saviour without outward washing, he must have erred greatly in saying, that it is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God that saves us.* But Christ's obviously spiritual meaning was consistent in this, with his doctrine of the regeneration. He inculcated also a lesson of humility, and told them expressly that he had given them an example, "that ye should do as I have done unto you."† Why is not this far more authoritative and better authenticated command, (for between the personal witnesses, John and Matthew, the beloved disciple undoubtedly takes precedence) binding as an ordinance on the church? Dr. Milner cites it to prove that his unwritten law of *tradition* must explain the written law of scripture. But in what manner will Bishop Hopkins, whose highest

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

† John xiii. 15.

and only law is, professedly, the written scripture, reconcile so glaring a discrepancy?

The body and blood of Christ, the living bread which cometh down from heaven, the well of water, in us, springing up into everlasting life,* are then but names to signify the substance—the Holy Spirit he promised to send his disciples—himself, the Word which was in the beginning, the life and the light of men—ever present with his church to the end of the world. When man makes the offering of his natural life—that reasoning, serpentine, casuistic will that always chooses darkness rather than light, because it seeks to justify evil deeds—and submits passively to God's government in the soul, then he experiences the antitype of all outward types, and becomes, truly, a member of that church—militant and in suffering on earth—but triumphant and blessed forever in heaven. It is then that the real immortal man receives again his life lost by the fall, and, partaking of this spiritual flesh and blood of Christ

* John iv. 14.

day by day, dwells in peace with God, having been redeemed by it from the state of death and bondage to sin. There ever has been, is, and ever must be, but one will in heaven — that of God — whom now, by adoption, he can truly call Father, and to do whose will is his spiritual meat and drink.

The four remaining means of sanctity, called sacraments by Roman Catholic writers, are easily disposed of. Penance, which is translated repentance in Protestant versions, necessarily precedes conversion and amendment of life. Extreme Unction is a mere form, with so little scriptural foundation, as to render its examination superfluous, after what has already been said. That of Holy Orders stands upon the assumption that Christ instituted an outward priesthood, which I have sufficiently shown to be groundless. And Matrimony, a contract of a religious character, to be prayerfully entered into, derives no sanction from any act of man. God alone can join souls in this sacred engagement, and whom He hath joined, let no man put asunder.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF FAITH.

“By grace are ye saved,” saith the apostle, “through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”* And again: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”†

In this latter quotation the fact is asserted, that all men have access to that grace which

* Eph. ii. 8.

† Titus ii. 11-14.

bringeth salvation ; and its effects are perspicuously set forth. In the former that we are saved by it, through faith. It becomes then a very important matter to understand the meaning of faith.

I know of no better definition than this same apostle furnishes in his Epistle to the Hebrews. "Faith," says he, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* And surely, there could not be a finer series of illustrations, than those which follow his definition. By it, all the miracles, both in the material and moral world, have been wrought. Without it, the power of God has been rendered inoperative, even when manifested through his only begotten son. He told his disciples they might remove mountains, and that nothing should be impossible to them, if they had faith as a grain of mustard-seed — the smallest of all seeds — yet he himself did not many mighty works among his own countrymen, because of their unbelief.

* Heb. xi. 1.

“Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Here is the first requisite: to believe in the existence of God—an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Being—and a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. But, it is said, “the devils also believe and tremble.† It is, therefore, by works of a contrary nature to theirs, that saving belief in God is to be manifested. An outward confession may, in consequence, be without faith. The Atheist is not, of necessity, he alone who denies with the tongue that there is a God. On the contrary, the very highest profession may be made before men, while the conduct proves it but hypocrisy and lies. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”‡ He whose deeds prove that the affections of his heart are alien to God, is the true Atheist—the virtual believer that there is no God.

So, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,

* Heb. xi. 6. † James ii. 19. ‡ Psalms xiv. 1.

he is none of his.”* This, too, must be manifested by the fruits of that spirit. It is impossible that the same Holy Spirit can produce contrary effects—therefore its operation must be, to make the disciple like his Master, otherwise he is none of his. But how do we find Christendom at the present day? Is it any nearer that lofty standard which was plainly held up in precept, and exemplified in practice by Jesus Christ, more than eighteen centuries ago? Do we behold the evidence in fierce and destructive wars abroad—in fraud, covetousness and oppression at home? Are these manifest contradictions to every precept and every act, of both Christ and his apostles, the results of their teachings and their example? Who will dare affirm it in the face of that record of their sayings and doings, which forms, professedly, the ground-work of all our systems of morals and religion?

Christ promulgated his doctrine in language which is not susceptible of misinterpretation or

* Rom. viii. 9.

perversion. "Ye have heard," said he, "that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."* The whole tenor of his sermon on the mount is of the same character. But Christendom has, at this moment, the spectacle of a vast war, in justification of which the name of Christ has been invoked. The cognate churches, claiming outward descent and authority from him, are engaged in prayer for the success of their respective armies in the dreadful work of butchering each other. It may be appropriately to the god of battles, but surely not to Him who is one with Christ and his church. The supplications of the Roman Catholic priesthood of France, and its reformed hierarchy of England, are put up against the prayers of their official brethren of Russia—and, on both sides, in sanction of a contest

* Matt. v. 43-4.

which realizes, more than any picture ever imagined, the horrors of hell on earth.

The Apostle James declared that "wars and fightings," come "of your lusts that war in your members. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."* Every war that was ever waged, from the first to the present, had its origin in, and depended for its continuance upon, the cause here set forth. It is true, there have been defensive to resist aggressive wars. The degrees of guilt must vary, from the blackness of sheer ambition, lust, and cruelty, down to the mildest shade of transgression incurred in resisting atrocious wrong. But who shall judge of these? Are they not, in practice, imaginary extremes? Was there ever war without a pretext? Was there ever a cause defended by it, unstained by all the most ferocious passions of our nature, and the direst cruelties which man can inflict? The very existence of bodies armed and organized to

* James iv. 2.

do each other all the mischief they can, whatever the justice of either cause may be, is subversive of every idea of love, to God or man. The ordinary duel has this apology, that the offender and the offended meet to settle their own quarrel in their own way. But the national duel brings into mortal conflict, men who have no grudge to spur their revengeful appetites. The comrades of this war were the antagonists of the last, and the belligerents of to-day, the close allies in arms but a short time since.

This single case of war has been taken to exemplify the contrast between what modern religion, falsely so called, sanctions and actively upholds, and what Christ's express teaching, fortified by his practice, even unto martyrdom, positively forbids. With the like result I might go over the whole of his sermon on the mount, and point out almost as great an antagonism in every particular. So far is Christendom from having the Spirit of Christ, that even the poor mockery of respect to his doctrine, and an honest confession of inability to reach it in practice, is wanting. With their blind guides

to lead, the professed Christian churches turn back to the law which he expressly abrogated, and invert his recital of what was in old time, and what he then commanded.

But the argument is urged, that without resistance, oppression and tyranny would destroy political liberty;—that aggressions must be checked by coalition, and to render this effective, the science of war must be learned, and its machinery employed in the only available manner, irrespective of private opinions or duties. So thought the Jews formerly, when the precepts of Christ were obviously tending to convert men, from the blind instruments of human policy, to the meek champions of peace on earth, and good will toward men. “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.”* Their reasoning was correct, on the ordinary principles of expediency. But so far was the result from justifying their worldly-wise conclusion, that the very

* John xi. 48.

means they used to prevent it, were, by an overruling Providence, made the causes of their destruction.

May not the same moral be drawn from events now transpiring in another hemisphere? What, in the inscrutable counsels of Omnipotence, is reserved for the end, no man can tell. But all former history has shown this awful game a barren storehouse of future good. The necessity which justifies it, is the tyrant's plea as well as the patriot's. The political wisdom that plans, is as uncertain and short-sighted, as that which crucified the Prince of Peace, to preserve the integrity of a nation he came expressly to save.

I have introduced this subject, in order to illustrate the doctrine of Expediency as opposed to Faith. Man, in his fallen, unregenerate state, sets up his own wisdom, and reasons upon immediate consequences. He will not trust the eternal Wisdom which would demonstrate that no end can be safely reached by improper means. He will not hear the doctrine that God governs the universe he has created, and can,

and does overrule and control the purposes of men according to his own good pleasure. When Pilate vauntingly asked, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:"* This is the Christian's faith—faith in God; as omniscient—knowing all things, the end as well as the beginning: as omnipresent—without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground: as omnipotent—able to paralyse the assassin's arm, or deliver from serried legions of hostile foes—and as supremely good—who, to the temporal sacrifices of his obedient servant, will restore a hundred fold and reward with everlasting life.†

Christ again declared to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews."‡ In this eternal truth is contained the keys of the king-

* John xix. 10, 11.

† Matt. xix. 29.

‡ John xviii. 36.

dom of heaven. They who enter it are redeemed from the craft, the policy, and the grovelling wisdom of the unregenerate nature. They trust implicitly in God, and pursue the path of duty as his will is revealed in the innermost sanctuary of the soul. Though, like their Master, they may be hung up between earth and heaven, a spectacle for the scoffs and derision of men, they know the Power in whom they have trusted, and that, however humbled before the multitude, it is for the greater glory of the resurrection which will follow. As they fight not for a corruptible, but an incorruptible crown, they look only to their leader for direction and for safety. Obedient to all human institutions which God has set over them, except where to obey would conflict with his law, they suffer, but dare not resist violence for the testimony he has given them to bear. In this manner they fulfil all righteousness, even under the laws and the governments of the world. They are holy, harmless, and undefiled, in the warfare of the church — when brought before governors and kings for the sake of its Head,

suffering, if necessary, without answering ever a word, or speaking in his name what is given them in that same hour,* and what all their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.†

Faith, then, is a living operative principle — a reality, which manifests itself at all times, and on all occasions. It produces good works as a result — but always under the direction of that Wisdom which is from above — which sees the end from the beginning — which overleaps the evanescent and transitory, to contemplate the infinite and eternal.

In the acceptation of the world, faith is generally considered an affair of the head—but it is far otherwise. Whatever theories a man may hold, either through the force of education, or from a conviction of their correctness, it matters very little, provided the heart be right in the sight of God. If the natural stony heart of the first birth in sin, be changed by repentance to that fleshly table whereon God can write his

* Matt. x. 19.

† Luke xxi. 15.

law, if the spiritual eye be kept single to the glimmerings of light, even under the darkest theories that priestcraft ever fastened upon the mind, the whole body will, sooner or later, be filled with light—the day will dawn, and the day-star arise, Christ the Sun of the spiritual firmament.

But, as saving faith is the gift of God to him whose eye is kept single to the light made manifest, it is also dispensed, in infinite Wisdom, to meet man's capacity to receive it. The Apostle Paul declares the gospel of Christ to be the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth — “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”* As the soul becomes obedient and submissive to this power of the gospel “preached to every creature which is under heaven,”† the righteousness of God is *revealed* from faith to faith. “Till,” through the means and the dispensations appointed, “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of

* Rom. i. 16, 17.

† Col. i. 23.

God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”* In this stature, “we henceforth are no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,”* but established on that Rock which is immutable, the revealed will of God in the soul as its guide and governor forever.

The experience of Christians, however, in this conversion, is very different. While illustrating the state to Nicodemus, Christ declared, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”† And again: “as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.”‡ On some, and perhaps most, it is a gradual and almost an imperceptible work — while others are stricken down

* Eph. iv. 13, 14.

† John iii. 8.

‡ Luke xvii. 24.

in a moment, under the overwhelming sense of their lost and undone condition. The Apostle Paul, with whose history in this particular, my own closely corresponds, was, as is well known, of the latter class. On one day he lived under the law of men's commandments in his unregenerate state, self-persuaded that he was blameless—on the next, he felt himself the chief of sinners—for he had received his Saviour, the revealer of that depth of wretchedness in which he lay. To follow him singly in the regeneration, was thenceforth the great object of existence. Had he gone to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him, in order to learn what he must do, I have no doubt at all that his great mission would have been frustrated. But he had faith—living faith that the Power which had raised him from the spiritually dead, required no aid or assistance from human counsel.

It is owing to an opposite course of conduct, that man is so rarely found advancing beyond the Law into the gospel state. God speaks to him by irresistible convictions, which, for the

time, he must hear—But he turns from the great teacher within him, to some one of the “outward successors,” too often little better than the Pharisees of old, and, in order to save his natural life or will, loses that eternal life which is proffered him. Wrapt in the impenetrable covering of a formal profession, he fulfils the decent round of prescribed ceremonies, and lives and dies in the fatal delusions he has hugged so fondly to his bosom. The spiritual eye becomes blinded, and in the carnal ease of a respectable worldly professor of religion, he allows all his influence among men to pass, under the guidance of the counsellor he pays, in the support of error. Careless of consequences, and fearing men too much to investigate truth for its own sake, he is willingly harnessed in the Church of Anti-christ—for there are but two—“He that is not with me, is against me,” saith Christ, “and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.”*

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold,

* Matt. xii. 30.

now is the day of salvation.”* The moment which is passing in our lives is the turning point throughout all time and eternity. On this moment hangs the future, forever. Now, is the accepted time—it is all that we possess. No man can tell whether the next moment may be his, to work while it is yet day. Be his state of advancement in the school of Christ little or great, assuredly, he has work enough to engage all the energies at his command. This great work of salvation is entirely between God and his own soul. It concerns him alone, as if no other human being were on the face of the earth. As the measure of grace is personal to himself—as the dispensations meted out in infinite Wisdom, are adapted precisely to his own several state and condition, he can have no excuse for comparing his advancement with that of his neighbor. In fact, this is impossible, for to do so requires the knowledge of another’s heart. Nor can he stand justified in the sight of his final Judge, because, through the per-

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

verse inclinations of his natural will, he has committed himself to the direction of others. If, in sincerity of heart he do so ignorantly, then, although he must suffer loss while in bondage to the beggarly elements of human invention and craft, yet if that honest sincerity stimulates him to seek after truth, there will be a growth in spiritual stature, even under this law of man. But wo to him, if, deceived by the delusion he has embraced, his integrity is destroyed when conviction reaches the soul. The state of that young man who turned away sorrowfully from Christ, because he would not make the required sacrifice, will be his. To resign his false theories, to face the opposition, and even the scorn of his associates, to feel his own natural will, hitherto but slightly crossed, now crucified and buried by the baptism of Christ, must prove a severe ordeal. But the account is with eternity forever. Moral principles are as immutable as the throne of God. If sincerity of purpose, and purity of heart be lost—if a compromise be made with error—if that lowest platform of sheer justice to the

cause of truth and righteousness be evaded—he cannot pass the threshold of Christ's church. And the more he hugs his delusions—the more conspicuously his merits raise him to the bad eminence of a blind guide and teacher to others, the deeper will be his guilt, and the darker his retribution as an upholder of the synagogue of Satan—of the Church of Anti-christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING now given, in as brief and concise a manner as the importance of the subject would permit, my reasons for not subscribing to the doctrines put forth in the controversial works to which this is offered as a supplement, the object proposed, is, I apprehend, sufficiently accomplished. I have no wish to do more than furnish the honest inquirer after Truth, with a plain scriptural exposition of that certain rule or method by which the religion of Jesus Christ may infallibly be known. In carrying out this design, he will, at least, perceive that I can have no private or selfish end in view. I desire to gain no proselyte to a particular sect of professing Christians, nor have I any wish to uphold any especial ideas or opinions as worthy of acceptance. Engaged, I trust, with fearless-

ness of man, and singleness of heart toward God, to perform what my puny efforts can compass, in directing my fellow probationers to that Source of light and life, from which alone has been learned my little knowledge, I feel no motive but that of gospel love for their souls. The first and foremost wish of my heart is, to speak only what I know—the next, in so doing, to vindicate the ways of God to man. If there appears to be a presumptuous grappling with subjects of the greatest magnitude, let it be remembered that I follow only in the train of fallible and presumptuous men. I have the same interest at stake, and I must judge for myself. All the countless array of authorities could not sanctify error, and make it effective in the salvation of my soul. It is impossible, therefore, to avoid this investigation of the profound causes, which have led to the present condition and wants of our race. Every one whose spiritual perceptions are sufficiently quickened to feel truly his hold on immortality, and the utter insufficiency of all mundane pursuits to satisfy that immortal nature, must, of

necessity, enter this great field of inquiry. As he does it with singleness of heart, the light which makes manifest, will reveal to him the things of the Spirit of God. He will soon perceive that, in the school of Christ, all must be learned anew—that he has hitherto known nothing of the Divine Being or his attributes. But, as he progresses in that knowledge which cannot be shaken or superseded, his experience will enable him to compare spiritual things with spiritual. In the records of what holy men, who have gone through the same process, said and did, he will receive a confirmation, while, at the same time, his own testimony must be added to theirs, on proofs as positive, and even more so than the outward senses can furnish of outward things, that truth is one and the same forever. In this manner, he will be enabled to set his seal to the testimony of the righteous of all generations.

It is not through such witnesses that discredit is brought upon religious teaching. They illustrate doctrine by example, and cannot but receive that respect which a consistency between

precept and practice must ever command from even prejudiced hearers. And, in the warfare of the church militant with the inventions fastened by ambition and craft upon her holy profession, the armory, furnished by her enemies, will become polished and effective weapons in his hands. As his divine Master, in turning the artillery of the letter-wise scribes and Pharisees upon themselves, vindicated the ways of God, so will he, in convicting gainsayers from their own acknowledged authorities, place these upon their just footing, and strengthen the force of their testimony.

I have omitted all topics which lay not directly in my path, and have limited the examination, even of these, to what was necessary for a bare exposition of their character. Enough, I trust, has been furnished, to prove the consistency of the Holy Scriptures with themselves, and to exhibit from them, their idea of the Majesty on High. If not, the fault is assuredly my own—"Let God be true, but every man a liar." All human efforts to convey any conception of the great I AM must, forever, utterly

fail. The most I aim at is to break those images which the corrupt and grovelling wisdom of the worldly mind has raised, for incense to itself while ministering at unhallowed and worthless shrines!

The two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets, involve the sum of human duties—indeed, the first contains the all in all. To love God, who is declared to be love,* is to manifest that love by obedience. And the surest manifestation is perfect love to men; who, in the pure creation which came from his hand, and in the depth of degradation which has perverted it, still stand, as objects of his equal care, our neighbors and our brethren. God's love is manifested by the subordination of every temporal and transient interest to man's eternal welfare. The love which is begotten in the soul by obedience to His holy law, is of the same nature, co-extensive with the whole human family, and supremely solicitous for its everlasting salvation. Our present

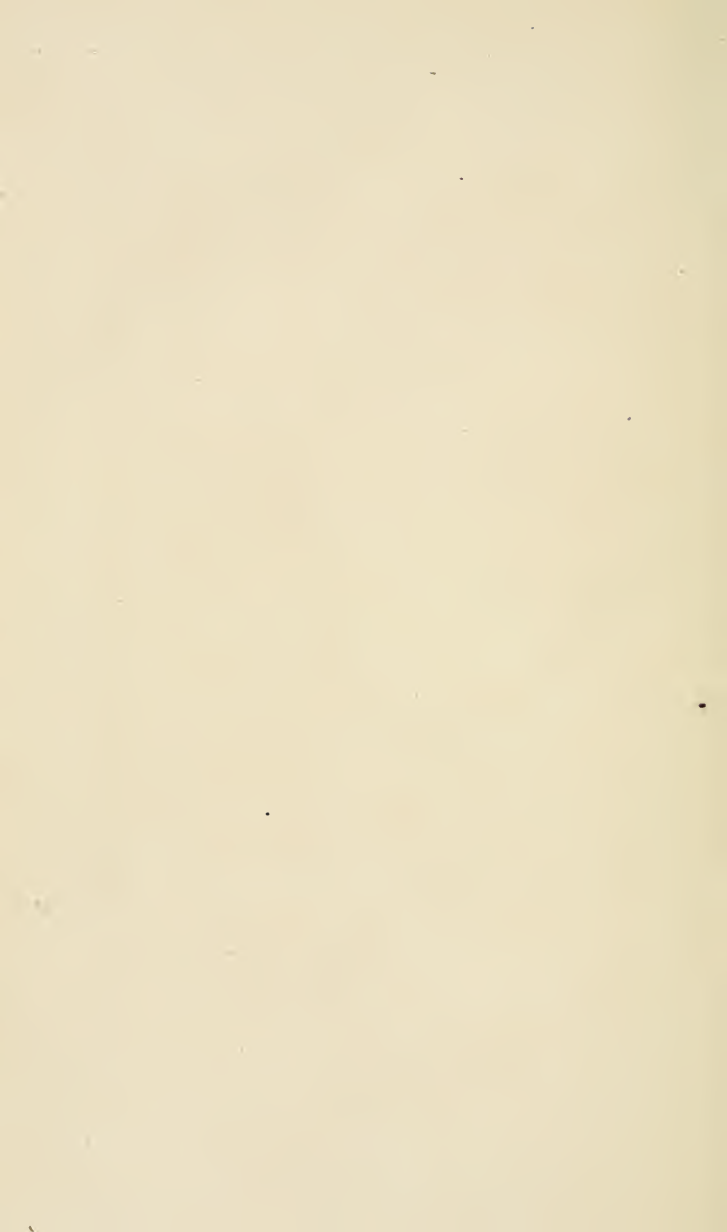
* 1 John iv. 8.

life is "a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is but preparatory to one without limit in duration, and to which it can bear no comparison. Every motive and every act, should therefore have reference to that state which is to follow. Hence the insignificance of worldly affairs, to such as confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and declare plainly that they desire and seek a better, that is, an heavenly country. To reach the holy Jerusalem, of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and the light,* or, in other words, to regain that Paradise where His will reigns and rules supreme forever, is the end and object of all their labors and sufferings.

* Rev. xxi. 22, 23.







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